Oct. 30, 1989

THE NEW YORKER

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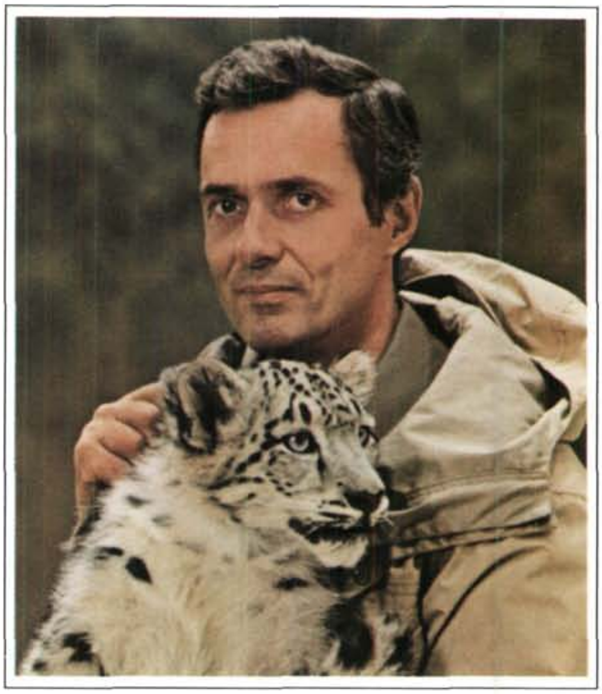

Snow leopards in the Himalayas. Tigers in the wilds of India. Mountain gorillas and lions in Africa. Jaguars in the swamps of Brazil.

George Schaller, pictured here with a snow leopard, has spent years in remote and rugged places studying the natural history of rare animals, and fighting for their survival.

He sees these animals as symbols of the habitats in which they live. Preserve their habitats and thousands of other plants and animals will be assured of a home.

As director for Science of Wildlife Conservation International, a division of the New York Zoological Society, Schaller and the staff have helped establish more than 50 reserves around the world.

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George Schaller

He points out that the destruction of environments is now so drastic that, in the decades ahead, the nature of life on earth will be irrevocably changed.

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For Schaller, saving fragments of nature is an urgent task.

Recently he faced one of his greatest challenges. With Chinese scientists, he collaborated in a project to save the less than 1000 giant pandas still alive in the wild. Currently he is working on the Tibetan plateau to help preserve the wildlife of those remote uplands.

Since his work takes him to some of the most forbidding places on earth, choosing the right equipment is crucial.

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THE NEW VISION

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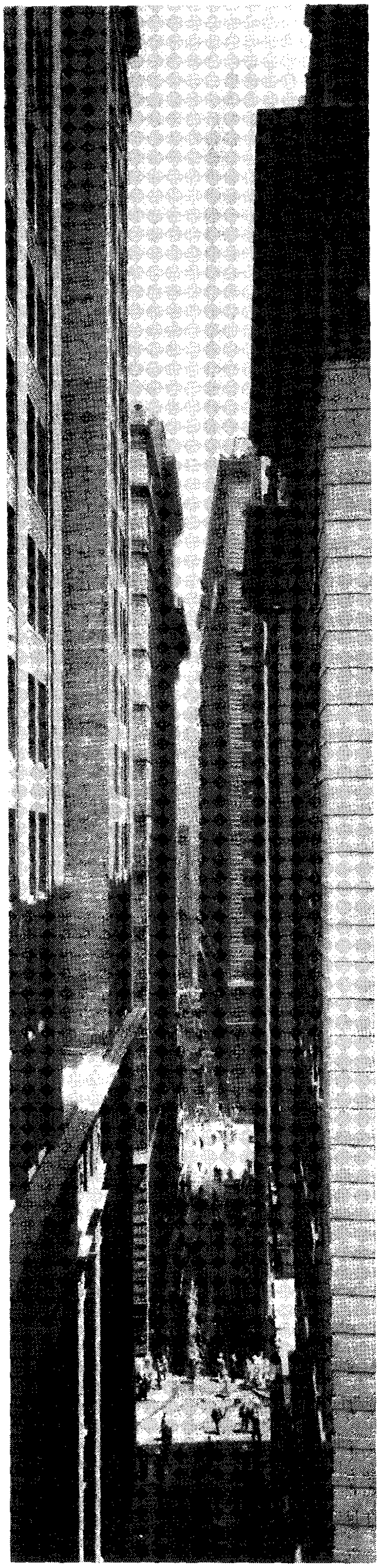

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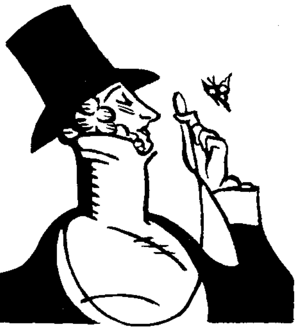

THE NEW YORKER

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

AT the beginning of "The House of Horror," Paul Zaloom's one-man show at the Vineyard Theatre, the self-styled "political satirist/performance artist" enters wearing a protective suit and takes up a position beside a structure draped in what appears to be a large trash bag. In hollow tones, he says something about taking us to the house of horror, laughs hollowly, and removes the garbage-bag covering. Underneath is a model of an ordinary suburban house—and if you are unimpressed by this piece of raillery you're out of luck. For satire, you've pretty much had it for the evening.

Or, rather, for the first of the evening's three pieces. We went to see "The House of Horror" in honor of Halloween, but crept out during intermission. To us it seemed like a puppet version of "Married . . . With Children." The title piece consists of Mr. Zaloom's moving an assortment of Duane Hanson-like hand-controlled puppets through the suburban house, making bodily-function jokes and talking in funny voices. His characters include a fat slob of a real-estate agent; a greasy German financier; a potential buyer and his drawling wife, plus their squalling baby and hyperactive twins; and an Italian grandmother. To find their antics witty or arresting you would have to have never heard of Harvey Korman, John Carpenter, or Steven Spielberg. Mr. Zaloom is not a particularly accomplished mimic, and appears to have little more to offer an audience than his evident contempt for aerosol cans, room fresheners, and certain types of people he considers less worthy and attractive than himself. So it's hard to see why the Vineyard Theatre company would have chosen "The House of Horror" to kick off their season. Since the piece has already been seen at Dance Theatre Workshop, the American Repertory Theatre, the Spoleto Festival U.S.A., and Lincoln Center's "Serious Fun!" series, we have to figure the Vineyard is jumping on a bandwagon—the wrong one.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Ben-Hur—A play by Thomas M. Disch, adapted from the novel by Lew Wallace. Opens Oct. 24 at 8. (Rapp Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 279-4200.)

Closer Than Ever—A revue of songs about contemporary urban life by Richard Maltby, Jr., and David Shire. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Grand Hotel—A new musical, based on Vicki Baum's 1929 novel, that is directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune. Karen Akers, David Carroll, Michael Jeter, and Liliane Montevecchi are in the cast. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

Gypsy—Tyne Daly stars in the revival of the 1959 musical. The score is by Jule Styne, the lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and the book by Arthur Laurents, who is the director of this production. Also with Jonathan Hadary and Crista Moore. Previews begin Oct. 27. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

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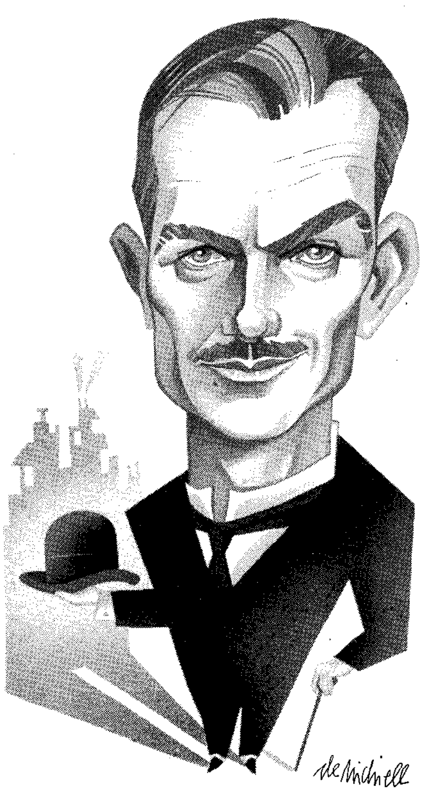

Sting in "3 Penny Opera"

Hyde in Hollywood—A play by Peter Parnell, with Robert Joy and Keith Szarabajka, that is the season opener for Playwrights Horizons. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez. In previews. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

The Lisbon Traviata—Terrence McNally's play, revised somewhat since it was seen earlier this year at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Anthony Heald, Nathan Lane, Dan Butler, and John Slattery again make up the cast. Directed by John Tillinger. Previews through Oct. 29. Opens Oct. 31 at 6:45. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—George Hearn, Milo O'Shea, Charlotte Moore, and Betty Garrett in a new musical based on Sally Benson's "Kensington Stories" and on the 1943 movie. Also with newcomers Donna Kane, Jason Workman, and Courtney Peldon. Directed by Louis Burke. In previews. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Prince of Central Park—A new musical with Jo Anne Worley as a woman who befriends a twelve-year-old runaway (Richard H. Blake) who lives in a tree in the Park. Adapted from a novel by Evan H. Rhodes. Previews through Oct. 29. Opens Oct. 30 at 6:30. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Secret Rapture—Blair Brown, Frances Conroy, and Mary Beth Hurt have the leading roles in David Hare's play. Previews Oct. 24-25. Opens Oct. 26 at 6:45. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Sid Caesar & Company—Mr. Caesar and friends appear in an upscale version of the show that ran this summer at the Village Gate. Directed by Martin Charnin. Previews Oct. 27-31. Opens Nov. 1 at 6:45. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Talented Tenth—Richard Wesley's new play, directed by M. Neema Barnette, and with Richard Lawson. Previews through the Oct. 29 matinée; opens that evening at 7. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

The Tempest—Frank Langella, B. D. Wong, Jay Patterson, and Angela Sherrill as Prospero, Ariel, Caliban, and Miranda. Jude Kelly is the director. Previews begin Oct. 25. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

3 Penny Opera—Pop singer Sting makes his Broadway début in this revival of the Brecht-Weill musical, which is directed by John Dexter. In previews. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

RECENTLY OPENED

All God's Dangers—Cleavon Little in a one-man show about an Alabama sharecropper. Written by Jennifer Hadley, Michael Hadley, and Theodore Rosengarten; directed by William Partlan. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Big Hotel—The Ridiculous Theatre Company's revival of Charles Ludlam's 1967 play, directed by Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes Oct. 29.)

Circle Repertory Company—The first play of the season is **beside herself**, by Joe Pintauro, directed by John Bishop. With Susan Bruce, Calista Flockhart, Lois Smith, and, in a supporting role, William Hurt. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

God's Trombones—A gospel musical, which ran on Broadway in 1963 as "Trumpets of the Lord." Based on the writings of James Weldon Johnson; directed by Woodie King, Jr. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 869-3530.)

The House of Horror—Paul Zaloom's one-man show. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Oct. 29.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Lady in Question—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a cool autumn evening. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks are among the members of the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Mastergate—Larry Gelbart's comedy, which takes off from the Iran-Contra hearings, doesn't quite achieve satire, but it does make for quite a lot of good jokes. The performance, under Michael Engler's direction, is excellent. (10/23/89) (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Orpheus Descending—A chaotic production of Tennessee Williams' ramshackle play about the passionate love affair between an Italian immigrant woman and a young man who goes from town to town, in the South, guitar in hand, making trouble. Vanessa Redgrave, though hardly convincing in the leading role, is certainly arresting. (10/9/89) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. With Kevin Conway, Mercedes Ruehl, Scotty Bloch, Arch Johnson, and James Murtaugh. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting **frankie**, a musical reworking of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein." Directed by George Abbott and Donald Saddler. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes Oct. 29.)

LONG RUNS

black and blue: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turned twenty-nine this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **the heidi chronicles:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **the kathy and mo show: parallel lives:** Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **m. butterfly:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. With Tony Randall and A. Mapa. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **me and my girl:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **rumors:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. Directed by Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **steel magnolias:** This first play by Robert Harling takes place in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

THE great Bolshoi stars Vladimir Vasiliev and Ekaterina Maximova, who are also husband and wife, were in town recently with a small touring group that is billed as "Superstars of the Bolshoi and Company." Although the dancers are performing around the United States and Mexico this fall, they aren't scheduled to appear in New York, so they arranged an informal demonstration for local balletomanes, friends, and colleagues. The program consisted of substantial excerpts from two ballets, each about an hour long and both choreographed by Mr. Vasiliev. "Suite Nostalgique," which Mr. Vasiliev described as a "Romantic" work, to evoke the Golden Age of classical dancing, was set to music by Russian composers; "Fragments of a Life (Tango)" used a score by the tango master Astor Piazzolla. "I have one question to ask you," Mr. Vasiliev said after the show. "Is this enough for American audiences?"

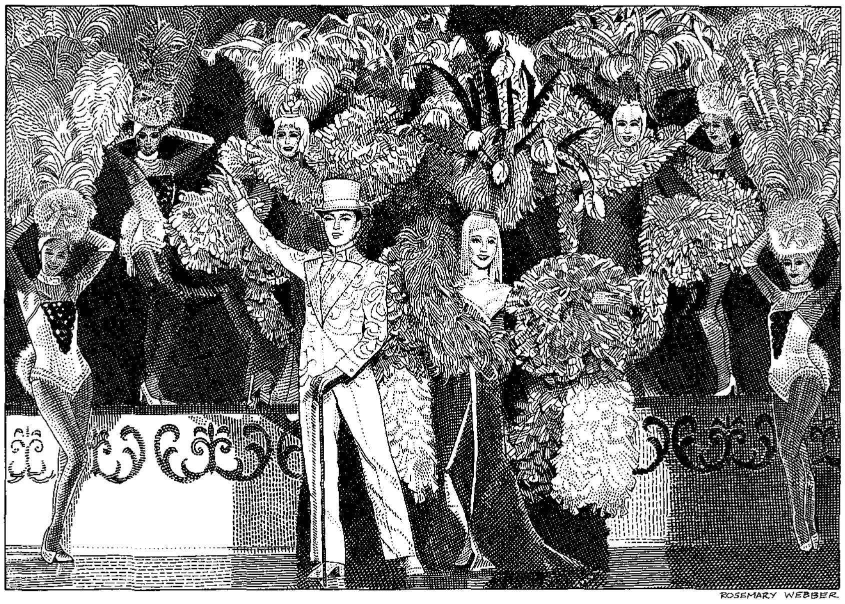
His words gave us pause. We had just seen more step combinations that drew steadily and widely on the classical lexicon than we'd observed in any two hours of the Bolshoi programs we attended at the Met during their last visit, and we had just seen more choreography driven by musical decisions than in any two hours at the Kirov, apart from their performance of Balanchine works. The dancers were well rehearsed and had a pleasing style, and the women could be captivating. Furthermore, Mr. Vasiliev and Miss Maximova proved to be spellbinders still. "She's fifty!" someone behind us kept exclaiming in awe, adding, "Can you believe it?" Miss Maximova has the figure, skin, and unguarded smile of a girl, and, though rather tiny, she can still project an expansive image through her movement, which never seems to break style. She can dance like this even with both eyes closed, as, for some reason, she kept them for much of her performance. "We can do more," Mr. Vasiliev said after the applause died down. "We have all kinds of pas de deux." Did this artist want to play New York? we asked ourself. Yes, we said yes he did yes.

Joffrey Ballet—Opening performances of a six-week engagement. Oct. 24 at 7:30: "Arden Court," "Sea Shadow," and the New York première of "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 8: "Cotillon," "Love Songs," and "Trinity." . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: "Billy the Kid," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Touch Me," and "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 8: "Viva Vivaldi," "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," "Valentine," and "Les Noces." . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8: "Billy the Kid," "Round of Angels," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Trinity." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2: "Viva Vivaldi," "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," "Valentine," and "Les Noces." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 7:30: "Cotillon," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Touch Me," and "The Pantages and the Palace Present 'Two-a-Day.' " . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 8: "Viva Vivaldi," "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," "Valentine," and "Les Noces." . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 8: "Billy the Kid," "Sea Shadow," "Touch Me," and "Suite Saint-Saëns." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Dec. 2.)

Nikolais and Louis Dance—Oct. 24 and Oct. 28 at 8: "Velocities," "Porcelain Dialogues," "Blank on Blank," and "Act One." . . . ¶ Oct. 25, Oct. 27, and Nov. 1, all at 8: "Mechanical Organ," "Intrados" (première), "Ancient Tale" (première), and "The Station." . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: "Crucible," "10 Legs," "Video Game," "Persons & Structures," and "Four Brubeck Pieces." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2 and 7:30, and Oct. 31 at 8: "Crucible," "Segue" (première), "Intrados," "Schubert," and "Video Game." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Nov. 5.)

Takarazuka Revue Company—An all-female troupe from Japan in traditional dances and in Western musical-theatre numbers. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 25-27 at 8, Oct. 28 at 2:30 and 8, and Oct. 29 at 2:30.)

Maguy Marin—Her company is appearing at BAM's Next Wave Festival (starting Nov. 1 at 7); on Oct. 27-28 at 8, a short preview of the work will be presented in the Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (for tickets, call 360-3503).



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NIGHT LIFE

SPO-DEE-O-DEE, on West 23rd Street and Eleventh Avenue, is a night club on the wrong side of the tracks. While 23rd is, for the most part, a thriving residential street, west of the abandoned elevated railroad tracks on Tenth Avenue it suddenly becomes a foreboding "On the Waterfront" warehouse district. Tom Puccio, the host of the club, which opened early last November, says of its address, "I call it a point-of-destination location. People aren't going to just walk by. They have to make a point of coming here."

In the last few months, more and more clubgoers have been doing exactly that. Once past the bouncers and the velvet ropes, you'll find a modest-sized space with a dance floor, a stage (there's live music seven nights a week), and a pell-mell décor that includes Victorian-style chandeliers, heavy green drapes sprinkled with stardust, and spotlit murals of Cotton Club-era dancers. When the place fills up, you'll also find an eyeful of waves, perms, teased and sprayed locks, lip gloss, pumps, fishnets, fringed jackets, leather pants, and designer-outlet new-wave apparel. Mr. Puccio, a gregarious promoter as well as a student of the sound bite, describes his weekend clientele as a "packed house of bridge-and-tunnel people." (The club may be out of the way for New Yorkers, but it's convenient enough to the Lincoln Tunnel.) Spo-dee-o-dee has also become a celebrity hangout, Mr. Puccio told us, and he listed a roster of patrons that could make a paparazzo swoon. "Judd Nelson practically lives here," he said. "Sometimes he tends bar as a goof."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **ANDREA MARCOVICCI,** the regal actress-torch singer whose act usually includes a healthy amount of Porter and Coward and who's currently appearing in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Singer **LAURIE BEECHMAN,** whose big number as Grizabella in "Cats" a few years back was "Memory," will work the room as of Oct. 24.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. **CARMEN MC RAE,** a jazz singer with a dry-eyed, unsentimental p.o.v., is in action Oct. 24-29. The Queen of Salsa, **CELIA CRUZ,** gets under way on Oct. 31, assisted by the **TITO PUENTE** orchestra. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, rock-and-roll fundamentalists, Village bopcats, and followers of those funky white men the **AVERAGE WHITE BAND,** who take the stage on Oct. 24. Folk-rocker **JESSE COLIN YOUNG,** who made his mark as the leader of the Youngbloods in the sixties and early seventies, shows up on Oct. 28. Pompadoured lounge lizard **BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS BANSHEES OF BLUE** headline on Nov. 1. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Johnny Cash at the Ritz

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, guitarists complete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Until Oct. 28, the place belongs to a trio consisting of **FREDDY COLE** (piano and vocals), **ED ZAD** (guitar), and **EDDIE EDWARDS** (bass). Pianist **KENNY BARRON** and bassist **RED MITCHELL** start up on Oct. 30. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, three walls of Vertès murals, and **JULIE WILSON,** who finishes her engagement here on Oct. 28. Singer and pianist **BOBBY SHORT,** who has been playing this room since 1968, is back in action beginning Oct. 31. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. *(982-4052)—In the late seventies and early* eighties, this dark cave was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Local rock has since diminished, but CB's perserveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

DELTA 88, *332* Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving, chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays, R. & B. on Wednesdays, and zydeco on Thursdays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the Western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hiber*nian sounds on Fridays. Irish bagpiper* Tim Britton—who's also knowledgeable in the ways of the wooden flute and the tin whistle—teams up with guitarist Carol Ann Hunner on Oct. 27. Sets at nine and eleven.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte*. The singer, scholar, and musical archeologist **SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** who likes to unearth forgotten lyrics and occasionally to sing a bossa nova in Portuguese, makes a visit Oct. 24-29. Mondays are set aside for guitarist **LES PAUL,** who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was an itinerant country picker. Music from eight. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. Russ *Kassoff and Linc Milliman claim Oct. 24-28;* **PETE MALINVERNI** and Dennis Irwin start work on Oct. 31.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. The Roadhouse is now the only Lone Star in town, and a bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." Working-class hero **BILLY BRAGG** appears Oct. 25; the latest good news from Canada, **BLUE RODEO**—a homegrown country-rock outfit that recently released a fine album called "Diamond Mine"—stirs things up on Oct. 28, with some help from the Kentucky Headhunters. **RUBÉN BLADES** goes to work Oct. 29-30. Music after nine. Dining.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A new, shiny, ninety-seat cabaret, sixty-five floors above all the honking and shouting. (It and the neighboring Rainbow Room—same telephone number, same stratospheric prices—are reached by taking a whistling express elevator; some people observe silence on the way up.) On clear nights you can see the lights of Yonkers and Tenafly. Singer, pianist, and composer **JERRY HERMAN** continues his engagement through Oct. 28, with singers Lee Roy Reams and Florence Lacey. Lisa Kirk takes over on Oct. 31. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at

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FUH-NET-IKS

Four stories above the hubbub, on the south side of Times Square, the electronic Spectacolor board was talking to us. Sandwiched between the advertisements ("Be confident . . . shop Pergament") and announcements ("October is national pizza month") flashed some strange word combinations that had us stumped. "Meet-sue-BEE'-she. Tow-YO'-taah." Something seemed suddenly familiar. "FOO'-gee." We began catching on. "Nen-ten-DOUGH. SO'-knee. KNEE'-sahn." Yep, Japanese made phonetically fun. These once-foreign words turned household names are made foreign all over again in easy-to-digest reconstructed logos by the L.A.-based artist Linda Nishio.

Across the street from this electronic artwork is a gargantuan red-white-and-green neon billboard, seen for blocks, that advertises a brand of film. We have always found this display quite daunting, but seeing its phonetic counterpart nearby was somehow reassuring. Maybe Nishio can next take on some of the bigger names around the neighborhood—"HAIR'-ee end lee-OH'-nuh HELL'-mmm-slea," "ZHEK'-en-dohrf," "DAHN'-uhld TRUH-mp," "SIN'-uh-plecks OH'-dee-ahn—and bring them down to syllabic size.

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This rock establishment, which early this year moved from the East Village to the old Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. The signature feature of the previous address, the giant Big Brother video screen, has been preserved intact. Upstairs in the balcony, there are designated seating areas for industry and non-industry people. June Carter Cash remembers watching Elvis Presley put nickels in a jukebox so he could hear a certain country singer sing "those low notes." **Johnny Cash**—the singer who earned those nickels—will be here with **John Prine** on Oct. 28, as part of the Marlboro Country Music Festival. Cash, the son of an Arkansas cotton farmer who, when he wed June Carter, married into the country-music mother lode known as the Carter Family, is likely to play "A Boy Named Sue," "Tennessee Flattop Box," and "I Walk the Line," while blowing a generous number of kisses to the crowd. **Camper Van Beethoven** performs with singer **Syd Straw** on Oct. 26, and the reggae band **Third World** appears on Nov. 1. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and perhaps the city's most international booking policy: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the territories explored. This week, two of Africa's most exuberant performers and their sizable entourages show up here: Zaire's **Papa Wemba** (Oct. 26) and Nigeria's **King Sunny Adé** (Oct. 30-31). Both groups employ a mix of African rhythms and electric guitars that can put you into a happy trance. Other highlights: the **Itals,** a reggae outfit, on Oct. 25; and the calypso singer **Mighty Sparrow** Oct. 27-28. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Spo-dee-o-dee, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A live-music and dance club on the outskirts of Chelsea. Oct. 25: Stradivarius. Oct. 26: Matt de Matt All-Star Mystery Jamboree. Oct. 27: Big Fun. Oct. 28: Destroy All Monsters. Oct. 29: Randy Michaels. Oct. 30: Bac, with Tony Bruno. Oct. 31: Benny and the Spiders. Nov. 1: Ray Gomez.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. Buffalo-born guitarist **Jim Hall,** who in the sixties had a steady gig with the "Merv Griffin Show" band, leads a quartet here Oct. 24-29. Flugelhorn master **Art Farmer,** whose high-school music teacher told him "You play more wrong notes than anybody I ever heard," will take part in a quintet as of Oct. 31. Shows from ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, **Tania Maria,** a singer equally conversant in jazz and Latin music, performs Thursdays through Saturdays. Music from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserve landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that have a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O.'d while trying to reason with the late Max Gordon, and that Mr. Gordon, who was a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingus-ized condition. Pianist and Bill Evans admirer **Michel Petrucciani** holds forth Oct. 24-29; **Tony Williams,** a hard-bop drummer who joined the Miles Davis quintet at age seventeen, starts a six-night stand on Oct. 31. Mondays are in the hands of the **Mel Lewis** big band. Music after ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke-veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. The Oyster Band performs on Oct. 25, Blues Traveler on Oct. 28, and S.W.A.M.P. on Oct. 30.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Cappellini finanziera, sepia-toned photos of old Firenze, and jazz. The last emanates from a passageway between a front-room bar and a back room reserved for trenchermen. **Kirk Lightsey,** a pianist whose credits include work on five Chet Baker records, is playing now. He's assisted by bassist **Cecil McBee** every night except Oct. 29, when bassist **Don Pate** sits in. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

YOU can't just head out to a club. You have to know where to go. And, because of an increasingly nomadic cognoscenti, you also have to know when to go. Tuesday night is busy at Limelight, but if you're prone to dancing in Adidas cross-trainers and bike shorts you're going to look more out of your element than Zsa Zsa at a driver's-ed class, because that's Heavy-Metal Night. The Red Zone hops on Wednesdays, but visitors there past the year of their Saturn return (twenty-eight) are going to feel like they've been transported to a parallel but younger universe.

A drastic miscalculation occurred last Saturday at the Sound Factory. On Friday, the Factory has a drop-shouldered, gold-chained, hey-buddy-I'm-talking-to-you contingent tenuously cohabiting with an I'm-dancing-don't-talk-to-me-or-I'll-snap-you-in-half-faster-than-Uri-Geller-can-mind-bend-a-spoon crowd. Apparently, one of the former group lost his way and wound up at the Factory's door one night later. "I'm sorry, you can't come in," said the doorman. "Say what? Say why," the celebrant replied, readjusting the fall of the yoke on his leather jacket. "This place is not for you tonight," the doorman cautioned. "Says you," the celebrant brayed, head bobbing as if one of his collar stays were jabbing his neck. The doorman then asked, "Are you gay?," at which the young man pushed up his sleeves, threw out his chest, cocked his elbows forward, flexed his thighs—in short, employed all the body language Lily Tomlin uses when she imitates a man—and bellowed, "Do I look like I am?" "No," said the doorman. "That's because I ain't," the celebrant said triumphantly. "Good," said the doorman. "Then you can't come in. Next."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY

PAUL KRASSNER was six years old and playing a Vivaldi violin concerto at Carnegie Hall—yes, he is the youngest known soloist in that theatre's history—when suddenly his leg started to itch. "I was torn," he said in a recent phone conversation, "between the natural impulse to scratch and my duty as a professional to repress." Without missing a beat, he stood on one leg and used the other to squelch the prickling feeling. The audience laughed. "I woke up to that sound. I had gone through childhood practicing, and now I was conscious. I wasn't attempting to amuse people, just trying to solve my personal dilemma. I learned two things: first, I had a passion to make people laugh; second, one person's logic is another's humor."

Since then, Krassner has flown on those insights as editor of *The Realist*, co-founder with Abbie Hoffman of the Yippies, a witness in the Chicago Seven trial, and, for the last nine years, a full-time standup comic. He shambles onstage, attired in sneakers and a satin baseball jacket. At some point, he invariably loses his thread, but saves the moment with a sheepish, ironic grin. Some digressions are intentional and get wittily woven back into the monologue. Now fifty-seven, Krassner continues to sift through the surrealism that is someone else's logic. When the serial killer Richard Ramirez learned of his death sentence, he remarked, "See you in Disneyland," prompting Krassner to wonder whether this was sloganeering run amok or a critique of the theme park. Recalling the time Krassner's daughter, at the age of sixteen, phoned him and played Carly Simon singing "Daddy, I'm sorry, I'm no virgin," the comedian reports, "I was torn between pleasure in her showing this creative way of sharing a new stage in her life and jealousy that I wasn't getting any when I was her age."

Krassner rips and yips on October 26 at 8:30, at the Village Gate.

Next Wave Festival—Christine Brunel, a dancer. (Oct. 24 at 7, Oct. 25-28 at 8, and Oct. 29 at 3.) . . . ¶ Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a Pakistani singer. (Oct. 27-28 at 8.) . . . ¶ Fred Curchak, a performance artist who uses a flashlight in his telling of "The Tempest." (Oct. 31 at 7 and Nov. 1 at 8. Through Nov. 5.) . . . ¶ Maguy Marin, a dancer. (Nov. 1 at 7. Through Nov. 5.) (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Big Apple Circus—Opening night under the little big top in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park is Oct. 26. For ticket and schedule information, call 391-0767. Through Jan. 7.

"To Ground Lightning"—A performance piece written by Anne Elias, with live music (by Joe Gallant, George Cartwright, and Walter Thompson), narration, film, and dance. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Oct. 25-28 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Wim Vandekeybus—A Flemish dancer and performance artist in "Les Porteuses de Mauvaises Nouvelles." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 25-28 at 8:30.)

La Mama—Oct. 26-28 and Nov. 2-4 at 10: Watchface. . . . ¶ Oct. 26-28 at 8 and Oct. 29 at 3 and 8: "Jack Benny!" a performance with music by John Moran. With the Ridge Theatre Company. (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

P.S. 122—Oct. 26-29 at 9:30: Alien Comic. . . . ¶ Oct. 27-29 at 8: Kumiko Kimoto. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 7 and 9:30: A benefit performance, with Bebe Miller, Ohad Naharin, Eiko & Koma, and others. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

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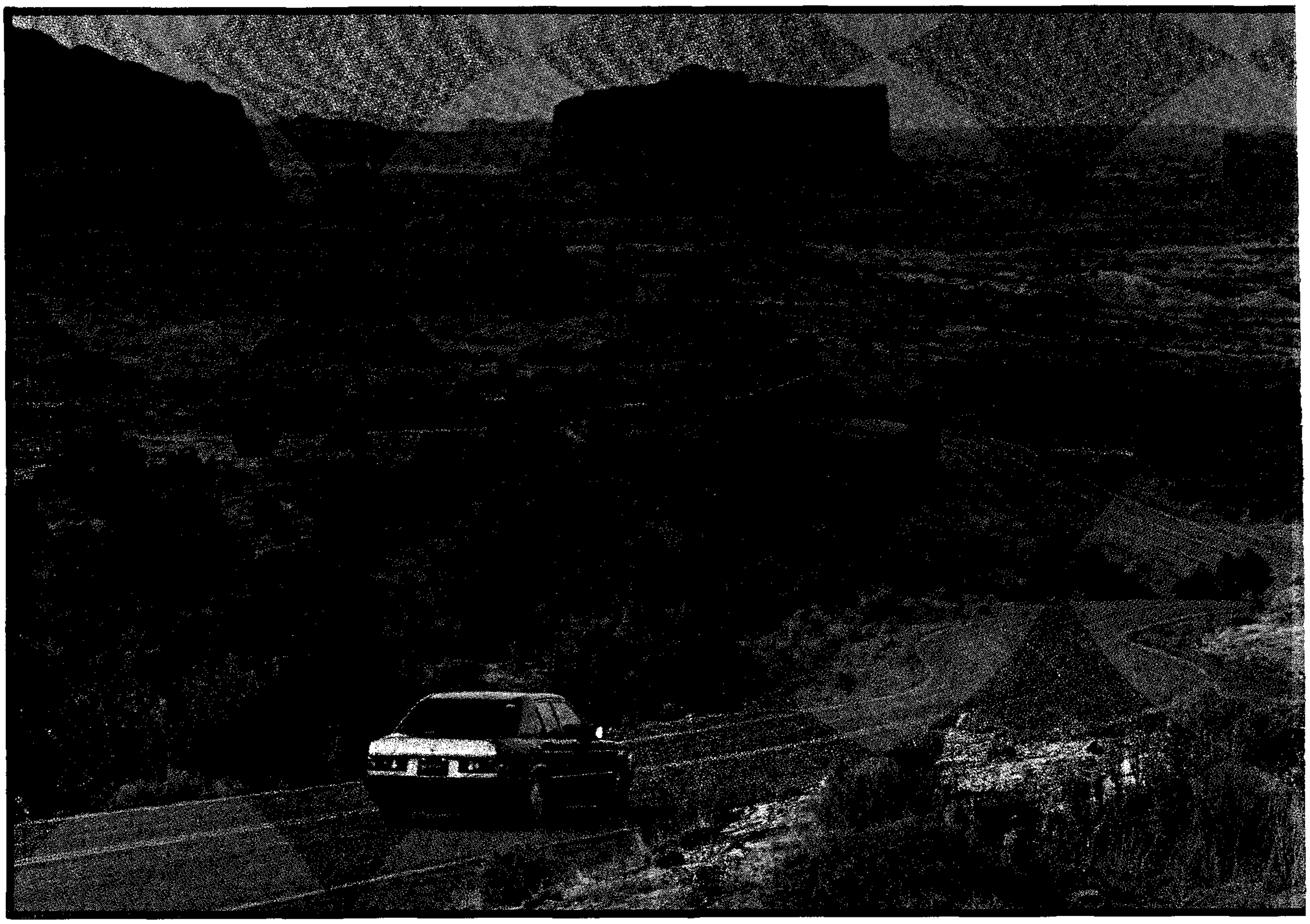

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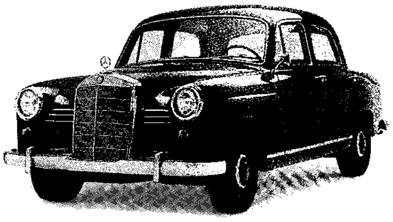

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

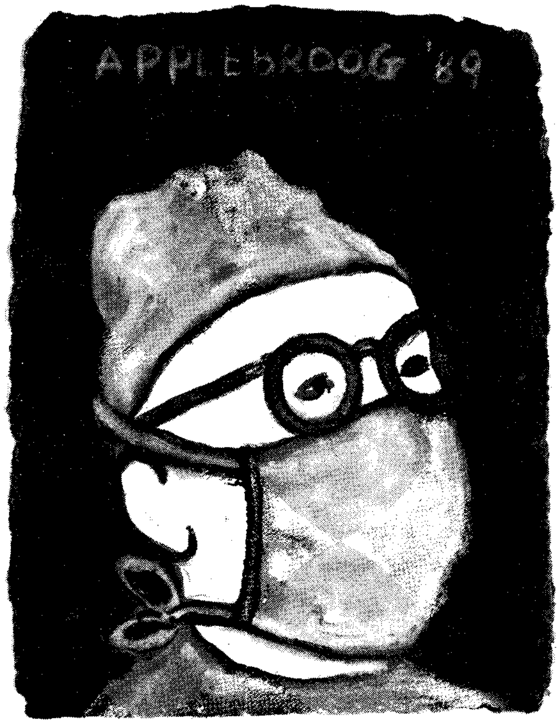
ARTE POVERA means, of course, "poor art." The term, coined in the nineteen-sixties by Germano Celant, the influential Genoese critic and curator who recently joined the Guggenheim Museum's high-powered new curatorial team, refers to a movement of artists—Italian contemporaries and counterparts of Joseph Beuys and Robert Smithson—whose work derives from a mixture of "low materials" (mud, produce, garbage, etc.), high tech (neon cathodes, glass, steel), and assorted Romantic and classical yearnings (for nature, for culture, for transcendence). Because of its emphasis on dramatic contrasts—between the common and the exalted, for example, or between light and mass—Arte Povera is in many ways a form of latter-day Caravaggism, not so very different from the impulse behind Caravaggio's once unacceptable "St. Matthew and the Angel," whose cross-legged saint bares dirty feet.

Over the course of the last decade, many Americans have fallen in love with Arte Povera, probably because it is so non-American: neither neat nor flat. This season, for instance, Barbara Gladstone has joined forces with the Milan-based dealer Christian Stein to open a new gallery, SteinGladstone, devoted to it. And the Guggenheim is currently housing a major retrospective of work by Mario Merz, a signal figure of this movement, curated by Celant. Virtually everything in this exhibition—igloo structures, spiral tables laden with vegetables and fruit, the use of the Fibonacci numerical series of natural growth, and the evocative and flexible use of neon as a kind of cosmic ink—rhymes spatially with the building itself. It is, in fact, an often beautiful but one-note show. One wonders if this artist's appeal has not a little to do with reverse chic.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A show giving ample evidence of Velázquez's genius as a portraitist: very sober portraits of the very inbred Philip IV; a depiction of consummate virility in the form of the Count-Duke of Olivares (the power behind the throne) wielding his baton from atop his rearing horse, ready to charge into the Basque plain; a luscious portrayal of the Infanta Margarita, which sparkles more divinely than any precious gem; and loving depictions of buffoons and dwarfs. A satiric portrait of a jarringly offbeat Mars shows why no one in art history (with the possible exception of Titian) could paint drapery like Velázquez. A final note: the wildly varying surfaces of the paintings leave the viewer longing for a history of their alterations. . . . ¶ In celebration of photography's hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the museum has put together a show that presents one hundred and twenty-five works made between the World Wars by Europeans and Americans. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism"—Well, the show is truly dazzling, and those who think that Cubism is dry and overly intellectual, or who feel that seeing this show is part of their cultural *duty*, will be happily surprised to find it juicy as well. Not that it isn't demanding: twenty galleries, on two levels, full of the stuff, wherein we follow the progress of the daring young men at their speediest, most intense, most symbiotically entwined. The show is beautifully installed in such a way that we get good doses of each artist on his own, passages in which they can be seen virtually as one, and periodic special cases in point—like bake-offs—in which their common cause and deep idiosyncratic differences become equally evident, with Picasso taking the blue ribbon here, Braque grabbing it the next time round. Beginning in 1907 with "Les Demoiselles," which is followed by two rooms of lush, monumentally primal nudes and Cézannesque landscapes and still-lifes (here as elsewhere, a number of loans from Moscow, Leningrad, and Prague pop out like conquering hussars), the show culminates in 1914, at the onset of war, when both artists were exhibiting the sort of license—freewheeling appropriations, campy turns, decorative borders, fun and games with signature placement—that for some reason we have come to associate with postmodernism. In between, of course, comes the grand experiment proper, and we are put through some tighter paces. The year 1910, for instance, brings obsessive draftsmanship and a deep-in-the-studio mood that opens out with Picasso's great trio of dealer portraits and is lifted by Braque's invention of *papier collé*. One gallery's installation, on the lower level, is keyed by the presence of blue in each painting, and arrives with perfect timing to relieve us of the dun-buff-gray tonal range of the artists' most hermetic phase. Texture and rhythm overwhelm one throughout. Even when musical instruments are not explicitly rendered in their work, orchestral sounds—now the brass section, now woodwinds—prevail. Music was Braque's lifelong love, and this exceptional exhibition is the portrait of a more transient love affair—between mortals—as well. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)



Self-portrait by Ida Applebroog

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Mario Merz exhibition. Through Nov. 26. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of oils, watercolors, prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper. The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. Through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—The twenty-fifth national print exhibition consists of eighty-two works by fifty artists and takes as its theme "projects and portfolios," which allows for some organizational creativity, such as the prominent inclusion of Matt Mullican's sixteen related etchings, whose glossary is the artist's most inclusive and informative work yet on his "City" sign system; Brice Marden's twenty-five-etching narrative of markings, which swells like a fine musical composition; and Stephen Ellis's very beautiful suite of aquatint washes, which lives up to its name, "Japanese Gothic." But while the show offers the opportunity to look at fine contemporary prints it ignores all the unique physical attributes that distinguish portfolios—such as their containers, which suggest a tactile nature—and also attempts to be too inclusive. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Small Constructivistic compositions by Vladimir Zakrzewski, of geometric shapes in a wide variety of styles, are marvels of drawing but are disengaged from a contemporary dialogue and fail to convey a very strong individual vision. Through Dec. 5. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—Works by George Ohr (1857-1918), the Mad Potter of Biloxi, who called his pots his "mud babies" and was so full of himself that he gave up his art because the world did not recognize his genius. But first he produced a remarkable body of funny, poetic, and provocative works in austere colors: demure vases with nasty, pockmarked lava glazes or slithering reptiles or handles that are elongated, angulated, or looped. Other vessels have been dented, pinched, or punched. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

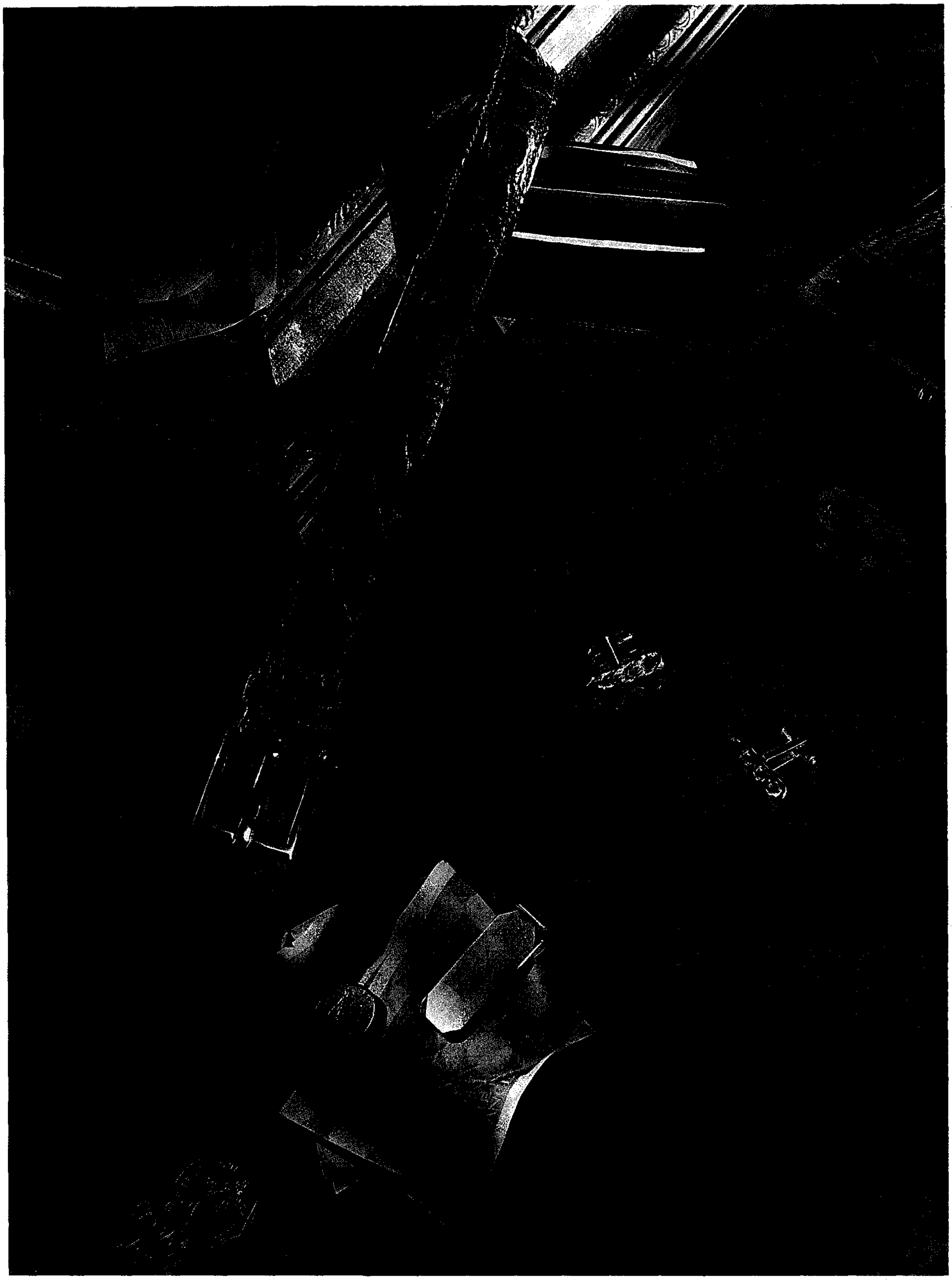
ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—The quiet and highly refined decorative style of the Japanese painter Itō Jakuchū (1716-1800) is not for everyone, but as represented in this show he is a poet when it comes to spotted snow, insect-eaten leaves, underwater movement, and the flourish of a gnarled tendril. His sparest paintings, with their keen compositional sense and subtle use of blankness, are his best. Jakuchū's virtually monochromatic screens and scrolls are equally exquisite, but in an entirely different manner: they are more gestural, more personal, more innocent in temperament—almost like a child's. Through Oct. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Alexander Calder (1898-1976) gave the twentieth century his monumental stabiles and elegant mobiles, but to his family and friends he also gave smaller wire sculptures, jewelry, and mechanical toys. More than three hundred of these gifts are collected here. . . . ¶ A well-presented, spiffy show of nineteenth-century jewelry from the museum's collection which is organized in neat categories appropriate to the categorical imperatives of the Victorian period: materials and techniques peculiar to the age, such as tortoiseshell and human hair, filigree and *pietra dura;* preoccupations, such as flowers and other natural specimens; revivalism, especially of styles of the then newly excavated ancient world; and jeweller stars of the day, such as Giuliano and Castellani. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St.—A show of more than forty photographs by Ansel Adams. Through Nov. 12. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Gardens and Ghettos," an exhibition of more than three hundred works made by or for Italian Jews, is best at the two ends of the long period it spans—the Roman Empire to

L'AIGLON MEN'S FINE LEATHERS AND JEWELRY



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the rise of Mussolini. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Exploring Rome: Piranesi and His Contemporaries": During the eighteenth century, artists flocked to Rome and produced drawings of grand neoclassic architectural fantasies. This show includes some fine examples of them, notably Robert Adam's sketches of picturesque fantasy ruins set in typical Italian landscapes and Giovanni Panini's watercolors of soaring barrel-vaulted arcades. But the grandeur of Piranesi—whose works are the centerpiece of this fine display—is without rival, be it in feverishly dark etchings of monumental prisons or in drawings for vault and wall decorations that transpose the pomp of heraldry to a symphonic scale. . . . ¶ A modest show paying tribute to Jean Cocteau on his centenary that is comically, Waspily un-Cocteau. This array of letters, sketches, "little magazines," and autographed scores in dim hallway cases, over which one must lean to see the drawings—for instance, of Jean Marais, and of Raymond Radiguet, Cocteau's great love—hanging on the wall, tends to make viewers look like squinting lepidopterists. Perhaps better thus pinned, however, than not pinned at all. Both shows through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—There is a certain predictability in the way the museum has tackled chaos, the theme of its current show. But some of the works on display are standouts, especially Orshi Drozdik's weird scattering of porcelain objects on a lead sheet; and Cady Noland's "Model with Entropy" and "Celebrity Trash Spill"—brilliant examples of the city-dump-to-institutional-lost-and-found aesthetic genre. Through Nov. 26. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Nancy Graves—The artist's best work in years. Her new sculptures, with their bronze fans and ropes, are filled with graceful, spiralling pleasure—in spirit, they're similar to Matisse's "The Dance." The paintings are layered with imagery spanning nearly two decades, and each has a lacy relief jutting out from it. One is entitled "Overload of Desire," but the load is being borne admirably. Through Oct. 28. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Yves Klein (1928-62)—This epochal artist and provocateur once said he wanted to eliminate birds because they interrupted his view of the Côte d'Azur sky. Klein could indeed be quite possessive: he renamed *azur* itself International Klein Blue, and this special shade dominates the four fabulous sponge reliefs, the three mock-Tachiste body-imprint paintings, and the cast-bronze portrait of the artist Arman—set against a gold-leaf panel—included in this perfectly succinct show. Through Oct. 28. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Kenneth Noland—A splendid, bracing show of paintings from 1958 to the present, including targets, chevrons, several brilliantly shaped and colored canvases that resemble jewelry for walls, some O.K. stripes, and a few unexpectedly muted recent works with pieces of Plexiglas on their sides. The biggest target in the show, "Earthen Bound," from 1960, is a mind-expanding extravaganza of sienna, violet, and cadmium yellow that makes you want to keel over and let anything happen. Through Nov. 11. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Joe Zucker—A zesty show of recent paintings by an artist known for his material inventions and eccentric processes. Through Oct. 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Open Mondays.)

"From Architecture to Object"—This fine selection of Arts and Crafts objects includes, among other things, some very Chinese-like furniture with inlaid mother-of-pearl, by the Greenes; a lamp, by Albert Berry, with a shade of copper, mica, and abalone shell; an ever-welcome stalwart mission oak of Stickley; and an exquisite Frank Lloyd Wright dining table and chairs, from the Barton House, in Buffalo. Through Nov. 18. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

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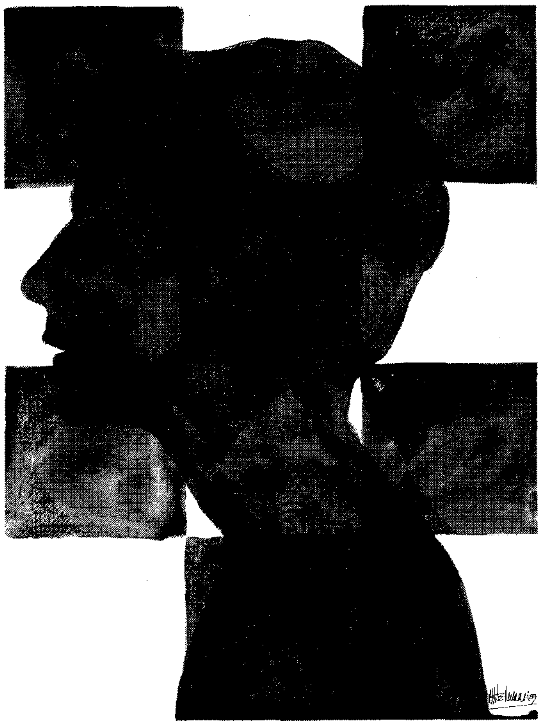
Short List—**giacomo manzù,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Nov. 3); **raphael soyer,** Lewitt, 16 E. 79th St. (opens at noon, through Nov. 4).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Josef Albers (1888-1976)—These paintings are a rather motley array of homages to the square. Through Oct. 31. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Joe Andoe—Insipid paintings of marked decorative appeal. Using a lyric, well-modulated black-and-white tonal range, this artist places the images of inherently sweet things—flowers, bird's nests—in triste landscape settings. Donald Sultan, known for his pictures of lemons on tarry grounds, has produced heartier specimens of the same, poor-little-hotcakes genre. Through Nov. 4. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Mary Heilmann

Chris Burden—Though not a crowd pleaser, Burden is one of the more compelling postmodern artists. Throughout the seventies, he enacted extreme performances in which he was variously shot, crucified, and restricted to life on a shelf. Such acts of consummate denial were characteristically represented in exhibitions simply by their bullets or nails. The current show consists of three very precise-looking machines from 1983, which have a distinctly antiquated spirit: the "Speed of Light Machine," the "Frictionless Sled," and the "Flying Kayak." Although originally built to function, here—in a wonderfully peculiar kind of obsession—they are displayed as mammoth relics. Through Nov. 18. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

Sue Coe—A huge, masterly show about the American meat-processing industry, titled "Porkopolis—Animals and Industry," that encompasses everything from graphite drawings to paintings on paper to broadsides. Through Nov. 4. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

José de Creeft (1884-1982)—De Creeft was part of the Lachaise-Laurent-Zorach circle of American-based early modernist European sculptors. This show of works made between the wars includes a fine oversized head of a slave in beaten lead, stone reliefs that are sometimes hard to read, and watercolors that are good examples of early biomorphic modernism. Although he is equally skilled in each of these mediums, the artist's keen sense of stylization is most evident in the drawings here. Through Nov. 11. (Childs, 41 E. 57th St.)

Sam Messer—Good, old-fashioned, thick Expressionist figure paintings that depict persecution, repression, religious identity, wildlife, and the horror of birth with somewhat surreal figures, lots of maternal and fetal shapes, and gagged mouths. Through Oct. 28. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Jules Olitski—These spray paintings from the sixties are the type of quintessential Greenbergian figure-ground extravaganzas that have spawned an entire generation of bad abstract painters. Despite their often vast sizes—which refer to landscape—some contain a certain poetic modesty that's worth another look. Through Oct. 28. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Horace Pippin (1888-1946)—A small, representative group of history paintings, landscapes, and religious and domestic scenes by this esteemed black artist from Pennsylvania, who began to paint only in the nineteen-thirties, when he was in his forties. Pippin's Civil War-related pictures, such as "John Brown Going to His Hanging," are precisely imagined but fussy, and a portrait titled "The Artist's Wife" suggests the psychology and emotion absent from Grant Wood's "American Gothic." Through Nov. 2. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Rebecca Purdum—Recent abstract paintings by a young artist whose work is picking up strength and gaining depth before our eyes. These soft, blurred fields with their Orientalist colors recall Turner, Redon, and late Monet without straining too hard to do so. They have a mood (introspective, symbolist) but seem to be free of attitude. Through Nov. 11. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

William Tucker—New sculptures, on pedestals, with classical titles such as "Bucephalus" and "Xanthippe," which look anything but Greek: they evoke the naturalistic, gardens-and-grotto style of Romanticism, and also fossilized fecal remains. Through Oct. 28. (McKee, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**magdalena abakanowicz,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 25); **karel appel,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 11); **luis cruz azaceta,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 15); **joseph cornell,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 25); **grégoire müller,** Jason McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 28); **anne ryan,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 4); **william turnbull,** Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 22); **lawrence weiner,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 9).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Richard Bosman—Vertically stacked diptychs with stripped-down, figureless imagery and a mythological spirit. A few are too spare, but a painting of a horse prancing in a sandy cloud and another of a plane flying at dusk are steeped in atmosphere and not a little pathos. Through Oct. 28. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Jennifer Bolande—This artist's mystifyingly simple arrangements of objects sometimes seem tyrannized by the desire to be arcane, but this quality can also be their charm, since it sometimes results in neatly concise object-poems. One piece consists of a large wall-mounted flagpole with a small speaker behind its finial and is an eloquent and pared-down portrait of intrusion. Another piece consists of two stacks of shoulder pads sitting on each end of a mantelshelf, like trophies or modern armor. Through Nov. 11. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Howard Buchwald / Bill Richards—Very earnest and respectable paintings, on paper and board, of V-shaped angles. / Exquisitely detailed small drawings of leaves. Through Nov. 1. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Patrick Caulfield—These dull yet colorful paintings contain meticulously rendered images of food and home (flowers, steaks, lanterns, and fruit), arranged as if they were elements in spare, hard-edged minimalist

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paintings. Through Nov. 11. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Louise Fishman—Only a few years ago, Fishman was near the forefront of a wave of solid abstract painting, but these recent dark canvases about paint are not memorable and are generally less interesting than some of the works not on view but reproduced in the catalogue. Through Nov. 4. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Dan Flavin—Customarily, Flavin's neon sculptures are monumental and static, but in this new installation—of fluorescent fixtures with colored and uncolored tubes—they are also very aggressive. The fixtures hang in midair from two of the gallery's three skylights at sharp angles, like brilliant-colored lightning bolts. The work fits smartly within the ongoing nature-culture dialogue, and projects an urgent political tone. Through Nov. 30. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

Robert Gober—New sculptures that are purposefully blunt, very powerful, and somewhat bleak. Most of them, such as a metal drain set into a large white wall like some mystical piece of minimalist art, seem to be sublimations of sexual longing. A freestanding satin wedding gown is a fragile and ghostly portrait of absence. Through Oct. 28. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

James Hyde—A very nice show of paintings with propped objects. Hyde delicately uses rough materials with rich surfaces—concrete, glass, galvanized steel, and plywood. The works feel both matter-of-fact and alchemical. Through Oct. 28. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Ed and Nancy Reddin Kienholz—This eagerly anticipated show of recent work by the well-known Idaho-based husband-and-wife team is seriously disappointing. The pieces here lack the precise conception of Ed Kienholz' earlier, solo work. The results are visually unfocussed yet bombastic quasi tableaux that sometimes suggest botched taxidermy. Marisol, Nam June Paik, and Lee Jaffe all seem, at various times, implicitly on hand, but most eyebrow-raising are the several direct lifts from Christian Boltanski's distinctive archival-photo assemblages. It makes you worry that the Kienholzes' important themes—Native Americans, the West, wildlife, racism, the image culture—have been acquired secondhand as well. Through Nov. 11. (Louver, 130 Prince St.)

Jonathan Lasker—Large, colorful paintings of scribbles and hyper-consciously painted gestures that are simple and somewhat smug, but also surprisingly charming. Through Oct. 28. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

Stephen Laub—Enigmatic silver-leafed objects and the postage-size photographs that they frame contrast elegance with brutality in a penetrating way. For example, a snapshot of a dead Vietcong soldier with an ace of spades in his mouth is embedded in a splayed poker hand of five faceless cards. Through Oct. 28. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Hughie Lee-Smith—Realistic paintings with a slightly zany surrealistic spirit and with a deep, but not depressing, mood of isolation. His couple in a grassy field is a contemporary "American Gothic." Through Nov. 4. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

Sabina Ott—Flair-filled paintings of Echo in the form of an oval wreath and of Narcissus in the form of a faceless reflection; they seem to owe much of their mournful poetry to Ross Bleckner. Through Oct. 28. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

David Reed—Few can make pure paint glide and glow the way this artist can. These rich paintings with expanses of solid color as luscious as icing and with velvety swirls—inspired by the quieter seventeenth-century Italian masters (such as Guido Reni)—are luminescent and somewhat Japanese in their containment. Through Nov. 15. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Richard Rezac / Group Show—Odd, small abstract sculptures that call to mind tanks, ships, anchors, and anvils in a sharp but somewhat familiar manner. / Of all the shows that have recently attempted to suggest the vitality of African-American art, this is the strongest. It's a small, unruly exhibition of multimedia works—by such artists as Adrian Piper and Darryl Turner—marked by its air of defiance, shades of Spike Lee, and many references to voodoo. Through Nov. 4. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Robert Smithson (1938-73)—Matter-of-fact drawings of three earthworks—"Spiral Jetty," "Broken Circle," and "Partially Buried Woodshed." Through Oct. 28. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

"China—June 4, 1989 . . ."—This past summer, in response to the Chinese government's brutal reaction to public rallies for democratic change, the Asian American Arts Centre invited artists to decorate doors to be assembled as an "Artist Wall." With eighty participating artists, the result is an impressive object. Its mostly individually decorated panels make the work seem more of an anti-wall; unlike a traditional barrier, it is a folding screen that spirals, shell-like, back into its center. Through Nov. 11. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

Group Shows—At the **CERVERA**, 470 Broome St.: Each work in this curious grouping is deliberately smart and dumb, some to great success—Mike Kelley's drawn triptych "Perversion of the Cone," Ann Messner's lead-wrapped steel cooler with a pierced metal bodily organ beside it, and Alan Belcher's hanging assemblage of fencing, plywood, and a photograph of a high rise under construction. Through Oct. 28. . . . **CUTLER**, 593 Broadway: Three very competent young abstract painters who you'd think were of another generation. Heather Hutchison uses ice-blue wax to make adequate Ryman-Marden-type post-minimal paintings—the kind common in the mid-seventies; Joanne Freeman's gestural paintings on playing cards and on maps are more accomplished, but attempt to invoke Jasper Johns and collapse under the weight; and Ron Rocheleau's peeling paintings of decaying geometric icons are pretty but contrived. Through Nov. 11. . . . **KLAGSBRUN**, 51 Greene St.: The works in this show seem somewhat young and underdeveloped, but at the same time they have a good, lively spirit undampened by commercialism. Guillaume Bijl's red velvet cloth arrayed with ordinary, for-sale tchotchkes has a contemporary European feel, and Luke Gray's old-fashioned abstract paintings are spirited and colorful versions of Patrick Henry Bruce's. Through Nov. 4.

Short List—**IDA APPLEBROOG**, Ronald Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through Nov. 11); **JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT**, Vrej Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Nov. 25); **ASHLEY BICKERTON**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 11); **R. M. FISCHER**, Jay Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through Nov. 11); **MARY HEILMANN**, Pat Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through Nov. 4); **CAROL HEPPER**, Esman, 70 Greene St. (through Nov. 18); **IMI KNOEBEL**, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through Nov. 11); **ROY LICHTENSTEIN**, Mary Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Nov. 18); **MARY LUCIER**, Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway (through Nov. 25); **RONA PONDICK**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 28); **DAVID ROBBINS**, American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (through Oct. 27); **JAN SAWKA**, Dorsky, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **CAROLE SEBOROVSKI**, Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway (through Nov. 11); **MICHELLE STUART**, Fawbush, 568 Broadway (through Nov. 8); **PAT SUTTON**, Slater-Price, 164 Mercer St. (through Nov. 9).

OTHER GALLERIES

Henry Chotkowski—An uneven yet largely inventive show of collages made from cut-up magazines and newspapers of political or ecological interest, and of assemblages, one of which is based on a graphologist's analysis of grade-school penmanship. Through Oct. 28. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. Opens at noon.)

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.—A very smart exhibition of paintings and numerous related drawings by a former New York City public-school teacher and his high-school collaborators—kids from the South Bronx that the system had deemed ineducable. The work is inseparable from its provenance, which is truly inspirational, and the images—fanciful, fantasy golden horns—are in essence self-portraits that the students created under the influence of a broad range of cultural references, from Uccello to Ninja weapons. The works' literary source is the last chapter of Kafka's unfinished novel "Amerika," upon whose pages they are painted. The show is a glorious sight—loud, brassy, and boisterous, with the intensity of Glenn Branca's guitar works and the joy of Mondrian's "Broadway Boogie-Woogie." The catalogue is also excellent. Through June 17. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

"The New Vision: Photography Between the World Wars" is a big-deal event for photography, a Metropolitan Museum bonanza that includes an exhibition curated by Maria Morris Hambourg that jumps with photographic Zeitgeists; an accompanying catalogue loaded with a who, how, what, when, where, and why treatment of its subject; and an additional book, edited by Christopher Phillips, that is a major contribution to the literature on photography—it's a compilation of European writing of the period, much of it translated here for the first time.

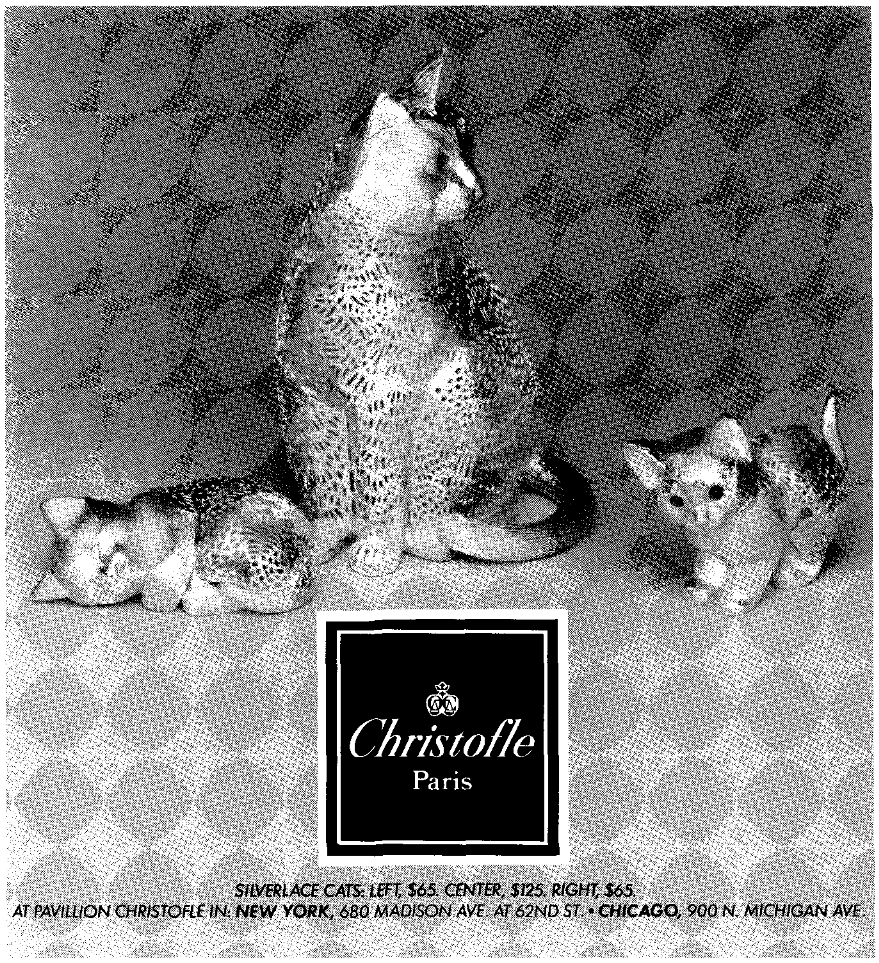
Many of the exhibition's images display such a belief in, and love for, machines that they could make one nostalgic for the days when "modern" equalled "better." But they don't, because they're surrounded by other images that are far from celebrating the Eden of technology. There are photographs that pivot on disorientation, others that capture alienation, and still others that are marked by the war that had just taken place—or the one that was coming. There's the glamour—swoon-producing portraits of Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich—that served as an escape from interwar anxiety. There's a Walker Evans self-portrait in which he's openmouthed like an Edvard Munch figure. There's a Magritte photograph of a man who appears to be standing beside a cannon, and one by Man Ray that shows a magnet joined to a toy pistol. There's also one of Hans Bellmer's relentless images of a doll—this one looks like a wounded being. Leni Riefenstahl's propagandistic record of people as perfectly synchronized obedients—taken at the 1936 Olympic Games, in Berlin—gives one the shivers.

The exhibition, which is divided into ten sections, comes from the collection, recently acquired by the Met, of John C. Waddell; here we see about a quarter of the bounty. It's clear that the reputation Waddell's collection has enjoyed wasn't just hype. Because of the Ford Motor Company's role in this acquisition, the prints are known as the Ford Motor Company Collection, which seems apt in light of the machine consciousness that so many of the photographs bear.

Berenice Abbott—Five decades of work—portraits, scenes of New York—by an unsentimental modernist. Through Jan. 6. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—Three exhibitions of works by Alexander Liberman, Barbara Kasten, and James Nachtwey, plus photographs from the permanent collection. Through Nov. 1. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**CLARENCE SINCLAIR BULL,** Staley-Wise, 177 Prince St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 28); **JO ANN CALLIS,** Drake, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 28); **LYNN DAVIS,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through Nov. 4); **LEWIS HINE,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 25); **HELEN LEVITT,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Dec. 2); **ALEXANDER RODCHENKO** and **JOEL STERNFELD,** Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 25); **TINA WHITE,** Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (through Nov. 16).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SILVERLACE CATS: LEFT, $65. CENTER, $125. RIGHT, $65.
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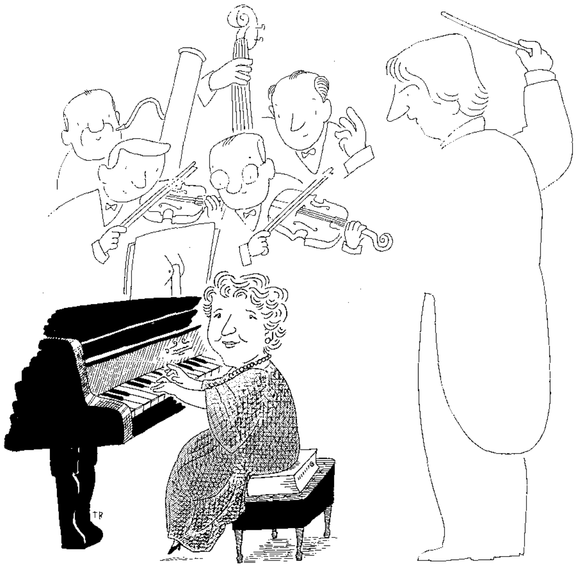
CHRISTOFLE FRAMES: LEFT, 5" x 7", $210. CENTER, 5" x 7", $185. RIGHT, 3½" x 5", $160.
AT PAVILLION CHRISTOFLE IN: BEVERLY HILLS, 9515 BRIGHTON WAY AT RODEO DRIVE
DALLAS, AT LORETTA BLUM, 4268 OAK LAWN AVE.



Alicia de Larrocha with the Philadelphia Orchestra

MUSIC

MARILYN HORNE, the mezzo-soprano star of the Met's current revival of "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" (October 24, 27, 30, and November 2), is one of the few singers of our day with a personal style she can call her own. She has developed a trademark approach to Rossini's comic heroines, which, over the years, operagoers have learned to like or dislike. Some find her brassy and self-assured to the point of vulgarity; others revel in her saucy bravura and unbridled enjoyment of vocal fireworks. When she last took the role of Rosina in New York, our music critic wrote that "in true Rossinian style, she kept us guessing what the next notes might be. Would she leap an octave, plunge an octave, add a trill, fly into inventive divisions, or even sing a passage familiar from the score?"

Miss Horne has among her colleagues in the show a bright and promising young tenor, Stanford Olsen, who sprang into action opposite Joan Sutherland a few seasons ago when the scheduled singer took sick midway through "I Puritani"; a big-voiced Soviet Georgian bass named Paata Burchuladze; and the two Quilicos. Quilico *père* is Louis, who has been singing lead baritone roles since 1953 (and at the Met since 1972). Nowadays he enjoys taking on comic bass roles such as Doctor Bartolo so he can appear in the same cast with Quilico *fils*, Gino, who has become quite sought after as Figaro, among other roles, over the past four seasons.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**AIDA,** with Aprile Millo, Stefania Toczyska, Giorgio Merighi, Andrew Smith, Paata Burchuladze, and Franco De Grandis; conducted by Christian Badea. (Oct. 23 and Oct. 26 at 8.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Marilyn Horne, Gino Quilico, Stanford Olsen, Paata Burchuladze, and Louis Quilico; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 24, Oct. 27, and Oct. 30, all at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Edita Gruberova, Neil Shicoff, and Wolfgang Brendel; Carlos Kleiber. (Oct. 25, Oct. 28, and Oct. 31, all at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Nelly Miricioiu, Myra Merritt, Richard Leech, Vernon Hartman, and David Malis; Donato Renzetti. (Oct. 28 at 1:30; and Nov. 1 at 8, when Brian Schexnayder will sing the role of Marcello.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Presenting "Il Trovatore." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Oct. 28 at 7:30 and Oct. 29 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Bernstein conducting. Oct. 24 at 7:30: An all-Copland program, with Stanley Drucker, clarinet. . . . ¶ Oct. 26-27 at 8: An all-Tchaikovsky program; no soloists. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8 and Oct. 31 at 7:30: Works by Mahler and Tchaikovsky. With Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone.

ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL—At Carnegie Hall, Charles Dutoit conducting. Oct. 23 at 8: A Schubert-Prokofiev-Hindemith program. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 8: Works by Bartók, Wagner, and Stravinsky. With Midori, violin.

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—Lukas Foss conducting a concert celebrating A.S.C.A.P.'s seventy-fifth anniversary. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 622-1000.)

ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE—Armin Jordan conducting. With Julia Varady, soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.)

MOSCOW VIRTUOSI—Vladimir Spivakov conducting the première of Sofia Gubaidulina's "Seven Words for Cello, Bayan, and Strings." With guest soloists. Also on the program are works by Haydn and Mozart. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 29 at 3.)

FRANKFURT RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Eliahu Inbal conducting a Ravel-Haydn-Tchaikovsky program. With Mitsuko Shirai, mezzo-soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 30 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Neeme Järvi conducting a Mozart-Shostakovich program. With Alicia de Larrocha, piano; Sergei Leiferkus, bass; and the Men of Singing City Choir. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 31 at 8.)

PHILHARMONIA VIRTUOSI—Richard Kapp conducting works by, among others, Shostakovich, Dvořák, and Tchaikovsky. With Carter Brey, cello. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 24 at 8.)

MANHATTAN PHILHARMONIA—Richard Fletcher conducting works by Beethoven and Shostakovich. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 27 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Hermann Michael conducting works by Britten and Debussy, among others. With Janos Starker, cello, playing the Haydn Cello Concerto in D. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 28 at 8 and Oct. 29 at 3.)

ST. THOMAS CHOIR—In a program of works by Fauré and Poulenc. With the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. Oct. 31 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 757-7013.)

RECITALS

SHOSTAKOVICH STRING QUARTETS—The last in a series of four concerts by the Manhattan String Quartet. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 23 at 8.)

GREGG SMITH SINGERS—Performing works by Winifred Keane. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Oct. 25 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

YOUNG UCK KIM AND PETER SERKIN—Violin and piano, performing the final concert in their series devoted to all the Beethoven violin sonatas. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 25 at 8.)

WALTER HILSE—Playing a concert on the organ. (Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Ave. at 85th St. Oct. 25 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing an all-Bach program. (St. Mary's, 145 W. 46th St. Oct. 26 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 921-2939.)

COMPOSERS CONCORDANCE—Presenting a program of contemporary works that incorporate electronics and video. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Oct. 27 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

VINEYARDMUSICKE—In a program of baroque chamber works. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Oct. 27 at 8.)

BEAUX ARTS TRIO—Performing pieces by Mozart, Ives, and Dvořák. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 27-28 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Performing a program of works by Bach and Luciano Berio. With guest artists, including Mary Ann Hart, soprano; Carmit Zori, violin; Anthony Newman, organ and harpsichord; and with artists of the society. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 27 at 8, Oct. 28 at 2, and Oct. 29 at 5.)

GALINA HEIFETZ AND STEVEN MASI—Violin and piano. (Hubbard Recital Hall, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 28 at 4:30. No tickets necessary.)

ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC—Twelfth- and thirteenth-century vocal and instrumental music in a program inspired by Umberto Eco's novel "The Name of the Rose." (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.)

WIND SOLOISTS OF THE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE—Performing works by Mozart and Dvořák. Alexander Schneider conducting. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 29 at 3.)

BEETHOVEN SOCIETY PIANO FESTIVAL—With Lydia Artymiw, Alexis Golovin, Seymour Lipkin, piano duo Schnabel, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 29 at 3.)

HOWARD SHELLEY—Piano, in his New York début. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 29 at 5.)

MUSICA VIVA—Presenting organist Olivier Latry. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. Oct. 29 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET—In a program of contemporary works. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 30 at 8.)

LEONARD RAVER—Organ, in a contemporary program, including premières of works by Ned Rorem, Lee Hoiby, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. Oct. 30 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

TWELVE TONE FUNK ORCHESTRA—A nine-member ensemble in a program of contemporary music. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 30 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

EUGENIE DENGEL AND BRADLEY PFALLER—Violin and piano. (St. Bartholomew's Church chapel, Park Ave. at 51st St. Oct. 31 at 6. Admission by contribution.)

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 31 at 8.)

TOKYO STRING QUARTET—Performing chamber music by Mozart, Beethoven, and Shostakovich. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 31-Nov. 1 at 8.)

NEW MUSIC CONSORT—Presenting Elliott Carter's "Syringa," among other works. With Barbara Ann Martin, mezzo-soprano; Jan Opalach, bass; and other soloists. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 1 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

SUSAN KAGAN—Piano, in an all-Schubert program. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 1 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

THE NEVILLE BROTHERS—Aaron, Art, Charles, and Cyril have left their bayou footprints all over pop music for nearly thirty-five years, from Aaron's soul classic "Tell It Like It Is" through their work with the Wild Tchoupitoulas to Art and Cyril's band, the Meters, which opened for the Rolling Stones on their 1975 tour. But it took the French-Canadian record producer Daniel Lanois (U2, Peter Gabriel) to finally craft a Neville Brothers album worthy of the name—this year's wonderful and commercially successful "Yellow Moon." Just about every cultural wind that has ever blown through New Orleans can be heard in their sound, a homegrown "world music" that achieves its greatest potency in front of an audience. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. Oct. 25 at 8.)

MARLBORO COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL—Leaving aside the calculated and uninspired headliner, the corporate aggregation Alabama, this

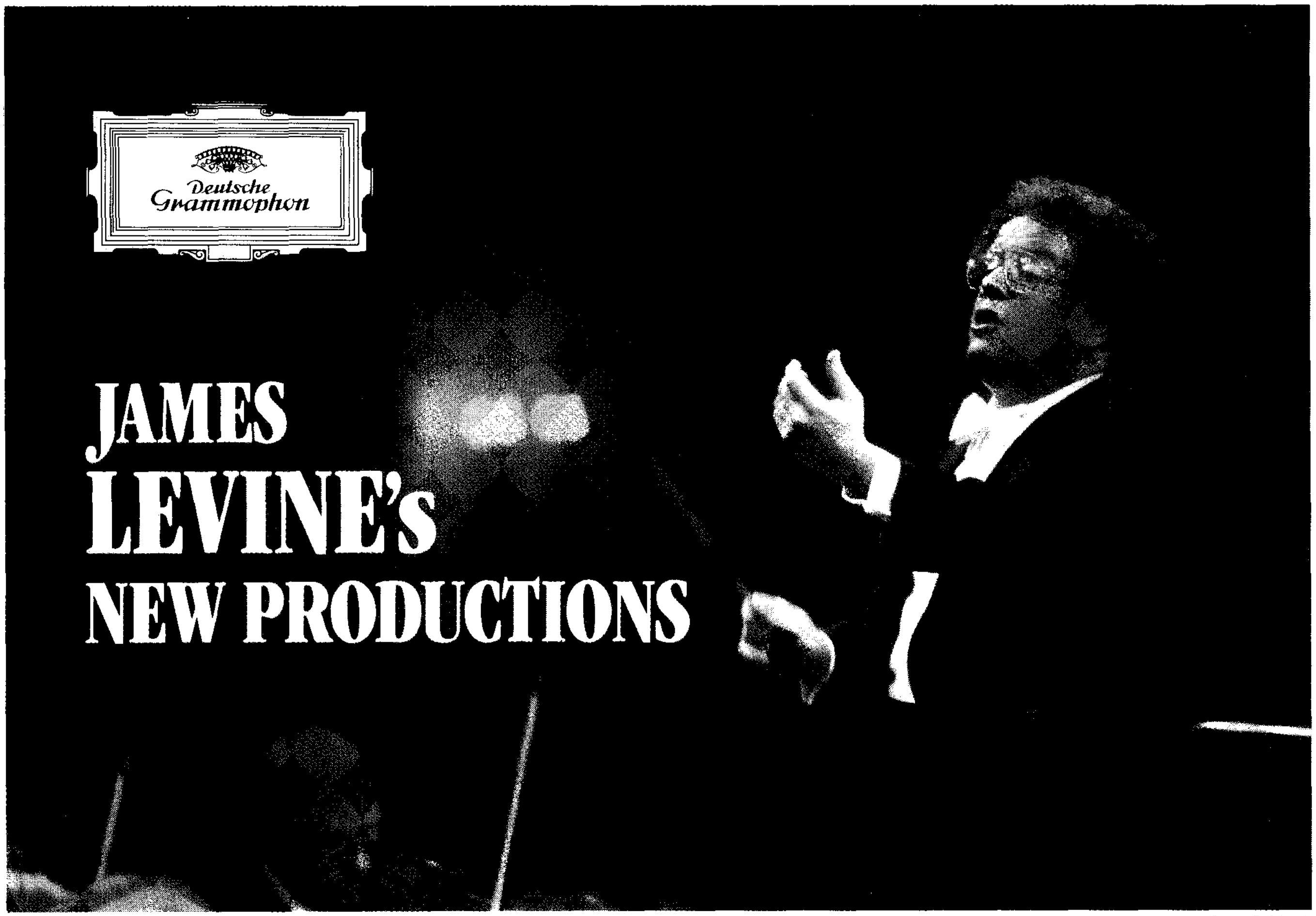
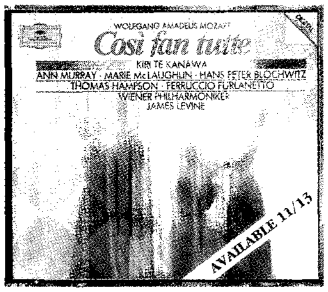

Deutsche Grammophon
JAMES
LEVINE's
NEW PRODUCTIONS

Photo: Reichardt


WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Così fan tutte
KIRI TE KANAWA
ANN MURRAY · MARIE McLAUGHLIN · HANS PETER BLOCHWITZ
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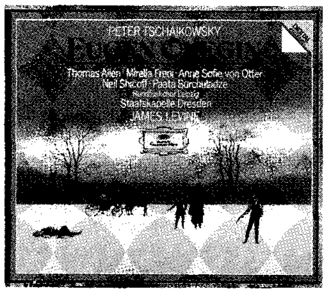
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Thomas Allen · Mirella Freni · Anne Sofie von Otter
Neil Shicoff · Paata Burchuladze
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is an exciting lineup of hard-core country talent (men's division). If it's a good night, the great Merle Haggard and his band of Bakersfield boys, the Strangers, will lift the crowd up to pedal-steel heaven with songs of pride, trouble, and patriotic brooding. George Strait, a swing specialist whose sound reflects a fondness for Bob Wills, will sing about all his exes in Texas, and a relative newcomer, Ricky Van Shelton, who had the foresight to have been born in the town of Grit, Virginia, offers tunes in the doleful George Jones–Randy Travis mold. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Oct. 29 at 7.)

David Byrne—David Byrne is speaking in tongues again. When Head-less, his solo projects—works in African music and Chinese woodwinds—have, for the most part, been composed for film and stage productions such as Robert Wilson's "The Civil Wars." Earlier this year, he put together a tepid collection of Brazilian pop, "Beleza Tropical." Now he has hired some Latin salsa players, along with a few Brazilian musicians, and has recorded "Rei Momo" ("Carnival King"). The results won't have Rubén Blades losing any sleep (for the real thing, pick up his latest album, "Antecedente"), but the record is energetic fun. On tour with a large group of musicians, David Byrne should, as usual, be mesmerizing. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 947-5850. Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at 8.)

McCoy Tyner Trio and John Blake—For anyone who has not seen Tyner in a club or in concert, this single-set recital is a free introduction to a jazz-piano dynamo whose improvisations incorporate the devotional and antic modes of Coltrane and Monk and the drive of Afro-Brazilian rhythms and accents. Violinist John Blake, who has done much to restore his instrument's stature in a jazz setting, will bring his Ellingtonian grace to the performance. With Avery Sharpe on bass and Aaron Scott on drums. (Winter Garden, Battery Park City. Nov. 1 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Moods Pangroove—A steel band from Trinidad and Tobago. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. Oct. 25 at 7:30. No charge beyond museum admission.)

"Cabaret Comes to Carnegie"—Kaye Ballard, Oct. 25. . . . ¶ Margaret Whiting, Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Julie Wilson, Oct. 27. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Evenings at 8.)

The Rolling Stones—Shea Stadium. 307-7171. Oct. 25-26 and Oct. 28-29 at 7.

American Jazz Orchestra—Mel Lewis conducting. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 26 at 8. For information about tickets, call 353-4196.)

Billy Taylor Trio—In the second of a three-concert series. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Carlos Montoya—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 27 at 8.

Alvin Lucier—Roulette, 228 West Broadway. Oct. 27 at 9. For information about tickets, call 219-8242.

Sunnyland Slim and Zora Young—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 28 at 8.

Larry Carlton—With Steve Morse. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 28 at 8.)

"Slippery Horns"—A concert sponsored by the Duke Ellington Society, with Art Barron, Dick Griffin, Lew Soloff, and others. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 488-1715. Oct. 29 at 2:30.)

Julio Iglesias—In a benefit concert. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 1 at 8.)

Criterion Cabaret—Through Oct. 29: David Brenner. . . . ¶ Starting Oct. 31: Ben Vereen. (Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10, and Sundays at 7.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the San Fran. 49ers, Oct. 29 at 4.

Giants—Vs. the Minnesota Vikings (and Herschel Walker), Oct. 30 at 9.

Rangers—Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Oct. 25. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, Oct. 27. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Oct. 30. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Vs. the Rangers, Oct. 28. . . . ¶ Vs. the Montreal Canadiens, Oct. 31. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Oct. 28. (Game time, 7:45.)

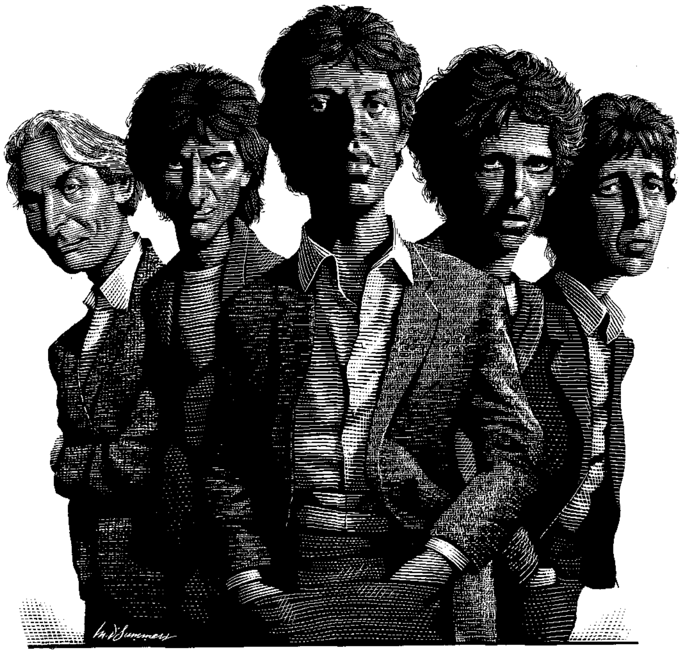
(The Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For information about Jets tickets, call 421-6600; for information about Giants tickets, call 1-201 935-8111. The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 587-9222; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-6050.)

RACING

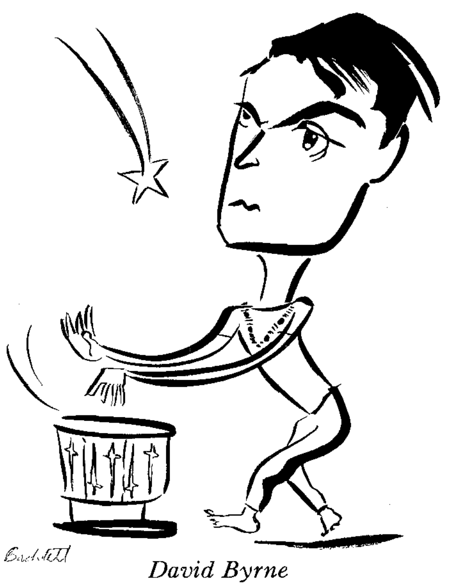
Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights, except Oct. 30, at 7:30. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—EQUESTRIAN

National Horse Show—Horses, horses, horses. They'll be show jumping, mostly (the American show-jumping squad will have to defend its title against teams from Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands), but also pulling carriages, wearing sidesaddles, and running obstacle courses. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Competitions Oct. 31-Nov. 4, starting at 8 A.M., and Nov. 5, starting at 5:30 A.M.)



The Rolling Stones



David Byrne

ABOVE AND BEYOND

To enjoy Halloween in New York, you have to set aside your jolly memories of Halloween in the suburbs. It's been a long time since children here went out after dark, alone, with the express purpose of taking candy from strangers. But if city living has made New Yorkers forfeit a traditional Halloween it has also given them a funky, festive, ghoulish holiday—not for children only, and impossible to replicate in places where alleys are less dark and buildings less tall. For the funky: David Byrne will be performing with his Latin band at Roseland (Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 947-5850), and the crowd is bound to be wearing feathers. For the festive: a riverboat will take revellers through the dark waters of New York Harbor (Oct. 27, 307-7171); and Bobby Short will perform at the Café Carlyle (Oct. 31, 744-1600), but only for people who come dressed as melodies. For the ghoulish: Louis Auchincloss and others will read ghost stories at the Murphy Center (Oct. 30, 369-8890), the New York Health & Racquet Club will host a blood drive (Oct. 31, 468-2000, ext. 5), and the organist Marsha Long will play "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" at Columbia University's St. Paul's Chapel at midnight (Oct. 31). But of all the events in all the city's corners the Greenwich Village Halloween parade (Oct. 31 at 7; gather at the corner of Spring Street and Sixth Avenue) is the most hair-raising and joyous: freaks, witches, children, yuppies, pets, float riders, and drummers will be dressed to the nines and marching chaotically through the dark.

Flower Show—This annual display of Japanese chrysanthemums at the New York Botanical Garden marks autumn the way fireworks mark July. (Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 4. Through Nov. 12.)

Talks—Bill McKibben, the writer and environmentalist, Oct. 26 at 6. . . . ¶ Norman Mailer, former candidate for mayor, Oct. 31 at 6. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0855.)

Memorandum—Daylight-saving time ends Oct. 29. On the night before, Oct. 28, set the clocks back an hour.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 26.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (directed by Vincent Ward).
Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: "Emma's Shadow" (Soeren Kragh-Jacobsen; in Danish).
Theatre 4: "A Dry White Season" (†).
Theatre 5: "Breaking In" (†).
Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Pierrot le Fou" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo. (Closed Mondays.)

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia. From Oct. 27: "The Bear" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
Theatre 3: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Sea of Love" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Oct. 26: "The Last Warrior" (Martin Wragge), with Gary Graham.
From Oct. 27: "Erik the Viking" (Terry Jones), with Tim Robbins and John Cleese.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Oct. 26: "Sea of Love" (†).
From Oct. 27: "Dad" (Gary David Goldberg), with Jack Lemmon and Ted Danson.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Fat Man and Little Boy" (Roland Joffé), with Paul Newman and Dwight Schultz.
Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).
Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Oct. 26: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard).
From Oct. 27: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through Oct. 26: "When the Whales Came" (Clive Rees), with Paul Scofield and Helen Mirren.
From Oct. 27: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Breaking In" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "A Dry White Season" (†). From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Oct. 26: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
From Oct. 27 (tentative): "Sea of Love" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Sea of Love" (†). From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.
Theatre 2: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "The Girl in a Swing" (Gordon Hessler), with Meg Tilly and Rupert Fraser. From Oct. 27: "Erik the Viking" (Terry Jones), with Tim Robbins and John Cleese.
Theatre 3: "An Unremarkable Life" (Amin Q. Chaudhri), with Patricia Neal and Shelley Winters.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson. From Oct. 27: "The Bear" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Oct. 26: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.
From Oct. 27: "Dad" (Gary David Goldberg), with Jack Lemmon and Ted Danson.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia.
Theatre 2: "Fat Man and Little Boy" (Roland Joffé), with Paul Newman and Dwight Schultz.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Fat Man and Little Boy" (Roland Joffé), with Paul Newman and Dwight Schultz.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley. From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.
Theatre 2: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Loews Orpheum 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard).
Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham. From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Guillen, and Julieta Serrano.
Theatre 2: "Carnival of Souls" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†). From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Apartment Zero" (Martin Donovan), with Colin Firth and Hart Bochner.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Scandal" (†). From Oct. 27: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "Sea of Love" (†). From Oct. 27: "Dad" (Gary David Goldberg), with Jack Lemmon and Ted Danson.

Quad Cinema, 54 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.
Theatre 3: "Fat Man and Little Boy" (Roland Joffé), with Paul Newman and Dwight Schultz.
Theatre 4: "The Girl in a Swing" (Gordon Hessler), with Meg Tilly and Rupert Fraser.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†). From Oct. 27: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson. From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.
Theatre 3: "Johnny Handsome" (†).
Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 5: "Sea of Love" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Oct. 26: "Sea of Love" (†). From Oct. 27: "The Bear" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
Theatre 7: "Breaking In" (†).
Theatre 8: "A Dry White Season" (†).
Theatre 9: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "When the Whales Came" (Clive Rees), with Paul Scofield and Helen Mirren. From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).
Theatre 2: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard).
Theatre 3: "Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Scandal" (†). From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).
Theatre 2: "When Harry Met Sally . . ."
Theatre 3: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 26: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard). From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.
Theatre 5: Through Oct. 24: "Breaking In" (†). From Oct. 25: "Sea of Love" (†).
Theatre 6: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Oct. 24: "Sea of Love" (†).
From Oct. 25: "The Bear" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Last Warrior" (Martin Wragge), with Gary Graham.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Method" (Joe Destein).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
Through Oct. 26: "Fight for Us" (Lino Brocka).
From Oct. 27: "Animal Behavior" (H. Anne Riley), with Karen Allen and Armand Assante.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
Through Oct. 26: "Parenthood" (†).
From Oct. 27 (tentative): "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

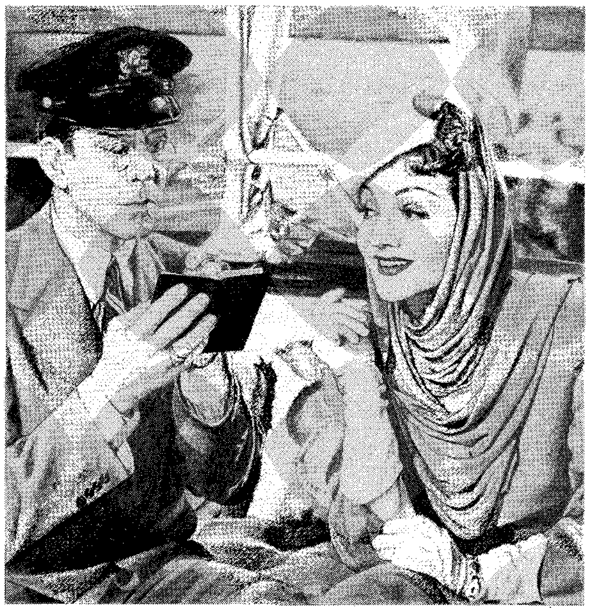
Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Fat Man and Little Boy" (Roland Joffé), with Paul Newman and Dwight Schultz.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Little Thief" (†).
Theatre 3: "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo, in Moore).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Story of Women" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham. From Oct. 27:



Rudy Vallée and Claudette Colbert in "Palm Beach Story"

E. M. Forster's dictum that characters are either round or flat doesn't apply to any movie by Preston Sturges. The pioneer of a reckless, breakneck brand of American comedy, Sturges created dramatic personae who could be flat on their heads and round on their heels, and who came—by the dozens—in every variety of circle or square, globe or cube. His people collided like flakes in a snowstorm. Then he blew them into swirling patterns that, at their best, were both improbable and inevitable.

His fecund creativity and ingenuity (if not his mastery) are gleefully manifest in a Theatre 80 St. Marks double bill of two lesser Sturges farces, 1940's "The Great McGinty" and 1942's "Palm Beach Story" (playing October 29). "McGinty" is the story of a shrewd down-and-outer who rises in city politics by cracking other men's heads and using his own. The movie's main attraction, though, isn't Brian Donlevy's big lug of a title character, but the flurry of supporting players, including William Demarest as a ballot-buying politician who comments, "You can't get away from arithmetic," and Akim Tamiroff as the behind-the-scenes boss who argues that without a political machine everybody would "be at the mercy." What's memorable about "Palm Beach Story" isn't the marital comedy of proper inventor Joel McCrea and beautiful, giddy Claudette Colbert but the intervention of Robert Dudley's Texas Wienie King ("Get the meat cheap, that's my secret, and I ain't telling anyone") and the ineffable Ale & Quail Club. Decades before Robert Altman, Sturges shattered the line between background and foreground. Even at his second best, he was an inspired ringmaster of the American circus.

"The Bear" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia.

Theatre 4: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson.

Theatre 5: "Gross Anatomy" (Thom Eberhardt), with Matthew Modine.

Theatre 6: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Breaking In" (†). From Oct. 27: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "Sea of Love" (†). From Oct. 27: "Dad" (Gary David Goldberg), with Jack Lemmon and Ted Danson.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 26: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard). From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 26: "When the Whales Came" (Clive Rees), with Paul Scofield and Helen Mirren. From Oct. 27: "Immediate Family" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Glenn Close and James Woods.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).

Theatre 2: "Johnny Handsome" (†).

Theatre 3: "Kickboxer" (directed by Mark DiSalle and David Worth), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Theatre 5: "Next of Kin" (John Irvin), with Patrick Swayze and Liam Neeson.

Theatre 6: Through Oct. 26: "Blood Fist." From Oct. 27: "Worth Winning" (Will Mackenzie), with Mark Harmon.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"An Innocent Man" (Peter Yates), with Tom Selleck and F. Murray Abraham.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†); and "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 26: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks; and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†). From Oct. 27: "Erik the Viking" (Terry Jones), with Tim Robbins and John Cleese.

Theatre 4: "A Dry White Season" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Theatre 2: "Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers" (Dominique Othenin-Girard).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

Through Oct. 26: "Old Gringo" (Luis Puenzo), with Jane Fonda, Gregory Peck, and Jimmy Smits.

From Oct. 27: "Shocker" (Wes Craven).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Last Warrior" (Martin Wragge), with Gary Graham.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Oct. 23: "Blithe Spirit" (1945, directed by David Lean), with Constance Cummings, Rex Harrison, Kay Hammond, and Margaret Rutherford; and "In Which We Serve" (1942, Noël Coward and Lean), with Coward, Celia Johnson, John Mills, Kay Walsh, Michael Wilding, and Richard Attenborough.

Oct. 24-25: "Ryan's Daughter" (1970, David Lean), with Robert Mitchum, Trevor Howard, Christopher Jones, Sarah Miles, John Mills, and Leo McKern.

Oct. 26: "The Passionate Friends" (1949, David Lean), with Ann Todd, Claude Rains, and Trevor Howard; and "Madeleine" (†).

Oct. 27-28: "A Passage to India" (†) and "Summertime" (†).

Oct. 29-30: "This Happy Breed" (1947, David Lean), with Celia Johnson, Robert Newton, John Mills, Kay Walsh, and Stanley Holloway; and "Breaking the Sound Barrier" (†).

Oct. 31: "Doctor Zhivago" (1965, David Lean), with Omar Sharif, Julie Christie, Tom Courtenay, Alec Guinness, Geraldine Chaplin, Rod Steiger, and Rita Tushingham.

From Nov. 1: "Lawrence of Arabia" (1962, David Lean), with Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn, Peter O'Toole, Anthony Quayle, Omar Sharif, and José Ferrer.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Oct. 24: "Barry Lyndon" (1975, Stanley Kubrick), with Ryan O'Neal, Marisa Berenson, Patrick Magee, and Hardy Krüger.

Oct. 25-26: "Le Bal" (1984, Ettore Scola); and "Padre Padrone" (1977, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian).

Oct. 27-28: "In the Realm of the Senses" (1977, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese), with Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji; and "Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters" (1985, Paul Schrader; in Japanese), with Ken Ogata.

Oct. 29: "Diabolique" (†) and "The Wages of Fear" (†).

Oct. 30-31: "Bird" (†); and "Round Midnight" (1986, Bertrand Tavernier), with Dexter Gordon and François Cluzet.

From Nov. 1: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Five Easy Pieces" (1970, Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Oct. 24: "Town Without Pity" (1961, Gottfried Reinhardt), with Kirk Douglas, E. G. Marshall, Christine Kaufmann, Barbara Rutting, Robert Blake, Richard Jaeckel, and Hans Nielsen; "White Heat" (1949, Raoul Walsh), with James Cagney, Virginia Mayo, Edmond O'Brien, and Margaret Wycherly; and "D.O.A." (1950, Rudolph Maté), with O'Brien.

Oct. 25-26: "And Now for Something Completely Different" (1972, Ian Macnaughton), selected skits from the BBC-TV series "Monty Python's Flying Circus"; and "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975, Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones), performed by the Python team.

Oct. 27-28: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniel Auteuil; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.

Oct. 29: "The Shop on Main Street" (†); and "Lies My Father Told Me" (1975, Ján Kadár), with Yossi Yadin.

Oct. 30-31: "The Big Knife" (†); "Hangover Square" (1945, John Brahm), with Laird Cregar and Linda Darnell; and "Boomerang!" (†).

From Nov. 1: "The French Connection" (†); and "French Connection II" (1975, John Frankenheimer), with Gene Hackman and Fernando Rey.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 23: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada; and "Muriel" (1963, Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.

Oct. 24: "I Want to Live!" (1958, Robert Wise), with Susan Hayward; and "I'll Cry Tomorrow" (1956, Daniel Mann), with Hayward, Richard Conte, Eddie Albert, Don Taylor, and Jo Van Fleet.

Oct. 25: "Blonde Venus" (1932, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Cary Grant, and Dickie Moore; and "Shanghai Express" (1932, von Sternberg), with Dietrich and Clive Brook.

Oct. 26: "Mildred Pierce" (1945, Michael Curtiz), with Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, and Ann Blyth; and "Daisy

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Kenyon" (1947, Otto Preminger), with Crawford, Dana Andrews, and Henry Fonda.

Oct. 27-28: "East of Eden" (1955, Elia Kazan), with Julie Harris, James Dean, Raymond Massey, and Richard Davalos; and "Rebel Without a Cause" (†).

Oct. 29: "Palm Beach Story" (1942, Preston Sturges), with Claudette Colbert, Joel McCrea, Mary Astor, and Rudy Vallée; and "The Great McGinty" (1940, Sturges), with Brian Donlevy, Akim Tamiroff, and William Demarest.

Oct. 30: "Carmen" (1983, Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Antonio Gades; and "El Amor Brujo" (1986, Saura; in Spanish).

Oct. 31: "Freaks" (1932, Tod Browning), with Olga Baclanova, Leila Hyams, and Wallace Ford; and "Night of the Living Dead" (†).

Nov. 1: "Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon" (1943, Roy William Neill) and "The Woman in Green" (1945, Neill), both with Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

Theatre 1: Oct. 23 at 2:30: "Urinal" (1988, directed by John Greyson; a Canadian film). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 6: "Family Viewing" (1987, Atom Egoyan; a Canadian film). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 2:30: "Dead Ringers" (1988, David Cronenberg; a Canadian film), with Jeremy Irons and Geneviève Bujold. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6: "Marie in the City" (1987, Marquise Lepage; a Canadian film, in French). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 2:30: "Comic Book Confidential" (1988, Ron Mann; a Canadian film). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6: "Growing Up in America" (1988, Morley Markson; a Canadian film), with Allen Ginsberg, Jerry Rubin, and Abbie Hoffman. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 2:30: "Train of Dreams" (1987, John N. Smith; a Canadian film). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6: "Like Two Peas in a Pod" (1988, Diane Létourneau; a Canadian film, in French), "Lalala Human Sex Duo No. 1" (1987, Bermar Hébert; a Canadian film), and "So Is This" (1982, Michael Snow). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 2: "Family Viewing." . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 5: "Blind Trust" (1986, Yves Simoneau; a Canadian film, in French). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2: "Like Two Peas in a Pod," "Lalala Human Sex Duo No. 1," and "So Is This." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 5: "A Winter Tan" (1987, Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, and Aerlyn Weissman; a Canadian film). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 2:30: "Blind Trust." . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 6 and Oct. 31 at 2: "Jacques et Novembre" (1985, Jean Beaudry and François Bouvier; a Canadian film, in French).

Theatre 2: Oct. 23 at 6:30: Three films by Peter Herwitz, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 3: "My Friend Ivan Lapshin" (1984, Alexei Gherman; in Russian). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6: "Trail on the Road" (1971, Gherman; in Russian). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 3 and 6: "Bring Your Heads with You!" (1968, Wilhelm Bittorf; in German) and four short German documentary films. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 3 and 6 and Oct. 28-29 at 2:30 and 5: Three different programs of animated films shown at the Festival of Animation in Annecy, in 1989.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Oct. 24-28: Katherine Anne Porter's "Noon Wine" (1966, ABC), with Jason Robards, Olivia de Havilland, Theodore Bikel, and Per Oscarsson. . . . From Oct. 31: Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1978, PBS), with Nicholas Kepros. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." Oct. 24-28: Episodes 6-10 of "Monty Python's Flying Circus," with Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin. . . . From Oct. 31: Episodes 11-15 of "Monty Python's Flying Circus." Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the **Riklis Theatre,** "Films That Tell Time: A Ken Jacobs Retrospective," Oct. 25-26 at 2:30, Oct. 27 at 2:30 and 7:30, Oct. 28-29 at 2 and 5, and Nov. 1 at 2:30. . . . ¶ In the **Warner Communications Screening Room,** "The Rise and Fall of the Television Western," a survey of this genre, 1943-73, shown in eleven three-hour thematic programs ("Minorities and the Western," "The Classic Adult Western," and "The Warner Bros. Western" are a few of the groupings). Showings Wednesdays through Fridays at 1:30 and Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 and 2:35.

Asia Society, Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-2742)—Oct. 23 at 4: "Enemy of the People" (1989, Satyajit Ray; India). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 6:30: "Death by Hanging" (1968, Nagisa Oshima; Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 8:30: "So What" (1988, Naoto Yamakawa; Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 4: "First Date" (1989, Peter Wang; Taiwan). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6:30: "The Ceremony" (1971, Oshima; Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8:30: "Gunman" (1988, Kirk Wong; Hong Kong). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 4: "Pestonjee" (1988, Vijaya Mehta; India). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 6: "Dear Summer Sister" (1972, Oshima; Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 8: "Moonchild" (1988, Chito Rono; Philippines). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 4: "Tjoet Nja' Dhien" (1989, Eros Djarot; Indonesia). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6:30: "In the Realm of the Senses" (1976, Oshima; France/Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8:30: "So What." . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 4: "Far from War" (1987, Hu Mei; China). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6: "Hotel Pushpak" (1987, Singeetam Srinivas Rao; India). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 8: "At the Beach" (1984, Teng Wenji; China). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 2: "In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones" (1989, Pradip Krishem; India). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 4: "Empire of Passion" (1978, Oshima; France/Japan). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6:30 and 8:30: "Life Is Cheap" (1989, Wayne Wang; Hong Kong). Mr. Wang will be present at 8:30.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 27 at 6:30: "A Festival of Dreams" (1989, Hideo Osabe; in Japanese).

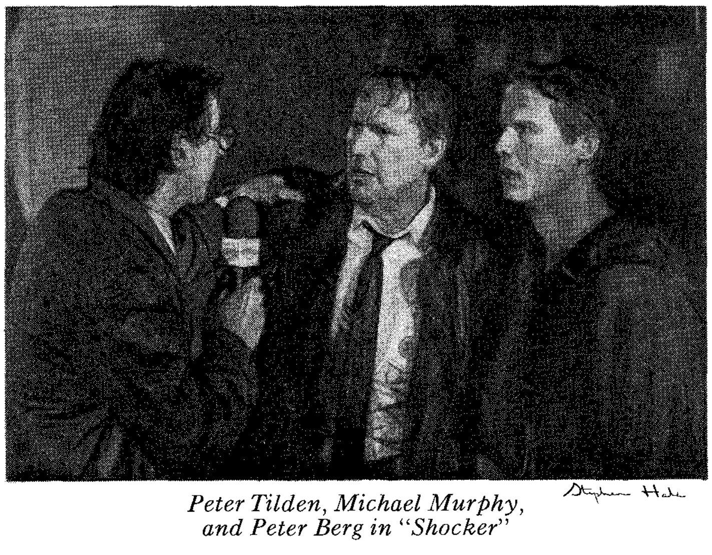
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. (570-3949)—Oct. 24 at 8: "The Sting" (1973, George Roy Hill), with Paul Newman, Robert Redford, and Robert Shaw. . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 8: "The World According to Garp" (1982, Hill), with Robin Williams, Mary Beth Hurt, Glenn Close, and John Lithgow. The author, John Irving, will be present.

French Institute—Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Oct. 25 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Died on a Rainy Sunday" (1986, Joël Santoni; in French), with Nicole Garcia and Jean-Pierre Bacri. . . . ¶ Three films by François Truffaut. Nov. 1 at 12:30: "Jules and Jim" (1962). . . . Nov. 1 at 3 and 8:45: "The Story of Adèle H." (1975). . . . Nov. 1 at 6: "Two English Girls" (1972).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.



Stephen Hale

Peter Tilden, Michael Murphy, and Peter Berg in "Shocker"

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Batman—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt: design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman; and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/10/89.) (Criterion Center.)

The Big Knife (1955)—It's in the same garish genre as "The Bad and the Beautiful." It's paced too fast and pitched too high, immorality is attacked with almost obscene relish, the knife turns into a buzz saw. Maybe because of all these faults of taste, you can't take your eyes off it. Rod Steiger gives a classic performance as a destructive, self-righteous Hollywood magnate; Jack Palance is surprisingly effective as the overwrought John Garfield-type star. With Wendell Corey, Shelley Winters, Everett Sloane, Jean Hagen, Ilka Chase, and Ida Lupino and Wesley Addy as sanctimonious characters who, regrettably, are the authors' mouthpieces. James Poe adapted Clifford Odets' play. Robert Aldrich directed, overdoing everything in sight; he just about turns hysteria into a style.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 30-31.)

Bird (1988)—Clint Eastwood, who directed, gives the life of the master of jazz improvisation—the bebop alto saxophonist Charlie Parker—the art-film treatment: flashbacks, rain, darkness, and a running time of two hours and forty-one minutes. With the film flashing back and forth, you can't get the hang of Parker's life story, and you don't come out with much understanding of his achievement or what made him a legend—the potent archetype of the self-destructive jazz artist. As Parker, Forest Whitaker trudges off to his gigs like a jazz version of Willy Loman; he's always fouling up—boozing and doping and smashing things. Whitaker gives a richly felt performance, yet he comes across as just a genial big blob of a fellow who can't get his life together. Some of his scenes with Diane Venora (as Chan Parker) have tension and a pricklish originality, and a few of his scenes with Michael Zelniker (as Red Rodney) have something comic and unresolved in them—Parker shows a streak of "just kidding" sadism. But mostly it's an earnest, lifeless movie. Joel Oliansky wrote the script; the cast includes Samuel E. Wright as Dizzy Gillespie.—P.K. (10/17/88) (Cinema Village; Oct. 30-31.)

Boomerang! (1947)—Elia Kazan was still a fledgling movie director when he did this modest, cleanly made, rather simplistic crime picture. It's based on an episode in the career of Homer Cummings (who was Franklin Roosevelt's first Attorney General); as a state's attorney in Connecticut, Cummings became convinced that a man he was about to prosecute was innocent, and set about gathering evidence to clear him. The film was shot in Stamford (the actual events took place in Bridgeport). With Dana Andrews, Jane Wyatt, Lee J. Cobb, Sam Levene, Arthur Kennedy, Cara Williams, Taylor Holmes, Ed Begley, Karl Malden, Robert Keith, Anthony Ross, Bert Freed, and nonprofessionals from the area, and with Joe Kazan (the man later celebrated in "America America"). The script, by Richard Murphy, was based on the *Reader's Digest* article "The Perfect Case," written by Fulton Oursler under the pseudonym Anthony Abbott.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 30-31.)

Breaking In—The John Sayles script about how professional small-time criminals live and practice their trades is confident, offbeat, and shallow, all at the same time. The director, Bill Forsyth, does a beautiful, clean job; he brings out everything there is to be brought out, but it isn't enough. Burt Reynolds plays an old-pro safecracker who lives in a tract home in Portland, Oregon, and doesn't call attention to himself; he trains a fluky adolescent, played by Casey Siemaszko, who can't resist flashing his new wealth. The film's patterning seems consciously quaint: an experienced prostitute (Lorraine Toussaint) who is training a novice (Sheila Kelley); a pair of retired crooks (Albert Salmi and Harry Carey); a pair of adversarial lawyers (Maury Chaykin and Steve Tobolowsky). Forsyth may have imagined that he could go around the margins of the quaintness and show us American life out of the mainstream—the stuff you don't usually see in movies, the life behind the billboards. But with a Sayles script you go behind the billboards and there's nobody there.—P.K. (10/16/89) (Angelika Film Center, Manhattan Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through Oct. 26.)

Breaking the Sound Barrier (1952)—The screen heroes who had been winning the war by killing Japanese or Germans gave way to quiet, worried-eyed heroes in this David Lean epic of the air. The most worried of them all is Ralph Richardson—the courageous, civilized modern man. Sober-faced and businesslike, he keeps his inner tensions under exquisite control (though we are always tipped off that he is suffering more than men who crudely vent their emotions). Terence Rattigan, who wrote the film, didn't exactly break any new ground in the air; he provides Ann Todd with that inevitable role of the prescient wife (the "please don't go up to break the sound barrier tonight, dear" type), and Nigel Patrick, John Justin, Denholm Elliott, and Dinah Sheridan and the others say and do just what you might expect were they carrying the White Man's Burden in remote Outposts of Empire. If you're tolerant, you'll just relax through all this low-keyed English valor and enjoy the soaring cinematography and the supersonic sound effects. Cinematography by Jack Hildyard.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 29-30.)

Carnival of Souls (1962)—This bleak, unnerving horror picture was made, in black and white, for about thirty thousand dollars, by a bunch of industrial filmmakers in Lawrence, Kansas. It's the story of a young woman named Mary Henry (Candace Hilligoss) who, after apparently surviving a car accident, becomes aware that she has become sort of *different*—not fully engaged in life, let's say. She seems to flicker in and out of existence, and she's more alone than any horror-movie heroine you've ever seen. Mary Henry is a kind of existential transient: her life fades in and out, as if she were watching it on an old TV with unpredictable reception. The director, Herk Harvey (who has never made another feature), achieves some terrifying and original scenes; even the movie's cheapness is expressive. The performances are variable, the settings are stark, the sound recording is erratic, and somehow it all works. Harvey pulls us through the movie by alternating scenes of everyday life with visions of death, and daring us to locate ourselves; in the flat, neither-here-nor-there landscape of "Carnival of Souls," we're never entirely sure where we are. Also with Sidney Berger, Frances Feist, and the director (who plays a menacing ghoul). John Clifford wrote the script. The beautiful 35-mm. cinematography is by Maurice Prath-

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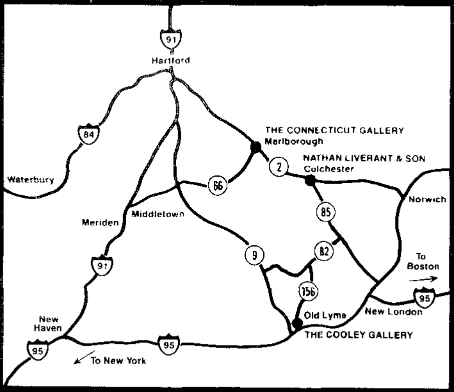

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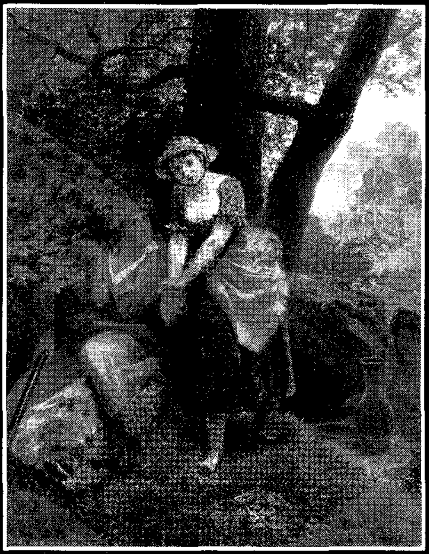

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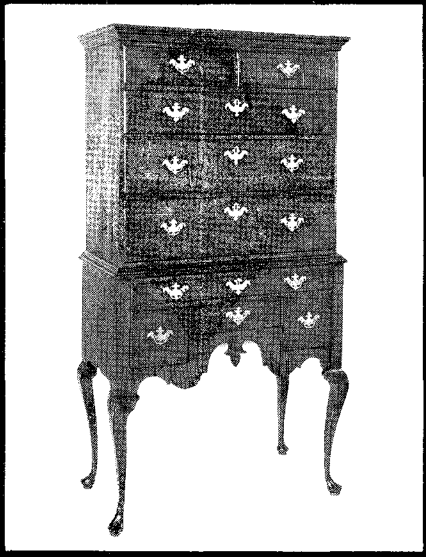

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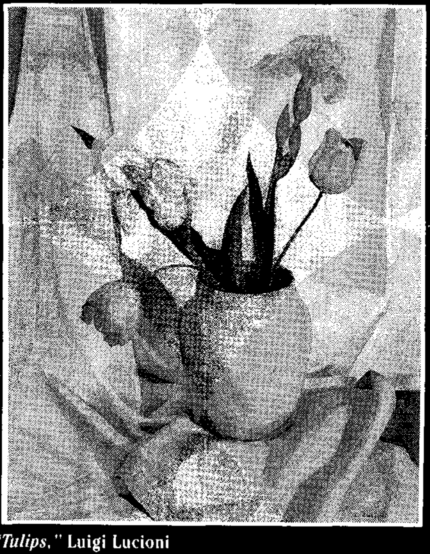

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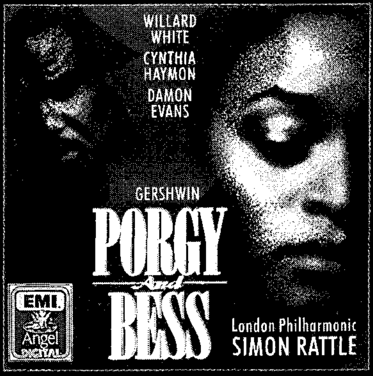

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STEREO REVIEW

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er. —T.R. (9/4/89) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Directed by Woody Allen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Diabolique (1955)—The setting is a French provincial school for boys; the headmaster's wife (Vera Clouzot) and mistress (Simone Signoret) conspire to murder him. It sounds simple, but the characters seem fearfully knowing, and there are undertones of strange, tainted pleasures and punishments. According to the director, Henri-Georges Clouzot, "I sought only to amuse myself and the little child who sleeps in all our hearts—the child who hides her head under the bedcovers and begs, 'Daddy, Daddy, frighten me.' " Clouzot does it, all right; his Grand Guignol techniques are so calculatedly grisly that they seem silly, yet they succeed in making one feel queasy and sordid and scared. In French.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Oct. 29.)

Drugstore Cowboy—With Matt Dillon, Kelly Lynch, James Remar, James Le Gros, and Heather Graham; directed by Gus Van Sant. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

A Dry White Season—In Johannesburg, a naïve white schoolmaster (Donald Sutherland) has his eyes opened to the police brutality involved in the death of his black gardener, and imagines he can obtain justice for the man's family. Marlon Brando is airily light and masterly as the veteran anti-apartheid barrister who takes the case even though he knows that he can't get anywhere with the rigged court. The romantic in Brando must have responded to the old rebel's romantic gesture: he saves the picture for the (short) time he's onscreen. But the director, Euzhan Palcy, seems lost; her work is heavy-handed, and the script (by Colin Welland and the director, from a novel by André Brink) is earnest and didactic. Performers such as Susan Sarandon, Jurgen Prochnow, Winston Ntshona, Janet Suzman, Michael Gambon, and Zakes Mokae sink into the obviousness of their roles and leave no trace. (Poor, uninspired, virtuous Sutherland is out of it; his characterization is one long whimper.)—P.K. (10/2/89) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through Oct. 26.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda." With Jennifer Tilly as Monica. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus.—P.K. (10/16/89) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 34th St. East, Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through Oct. 26.)

The French Connection (1971)—Tracking down a shipment of heroin in New York City. A hugely successful slam-bang thriller that zaps the audience with noise, speed, and brutality. It's certainly exciting, but that excitement isn't necessarily a pleasure. The ominous music keeps tightening the screws and heating things up; the movie is like an aggravated case of New York. It proceeds through chases, pistol-whippings, slashings, murders, snipings, and more chases for close to two hours. This is what's meant to give you a charge. There are no good guys. Gene Hackman plays the low-life police detective who cracks the case; porkpie-hatted and lewd and boorish, he's also a sadist. With Fernando Rey, Roy Scheider, Tony LoBianco, and Marcel Bozzufi. The script, by Ernest Tidyman, was based on the supposedly factual account by Robin Moore in a book about the largest narcotics haul in New York police history up to that time. William Friedkin directed.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting Nov. 1.)

Beau Bridges, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Jeff Bridges in "The Fabulous Baker Boys"

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids!—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors' down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special-effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie—which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita.—T.R. (Embassy; through Oct. 26.)

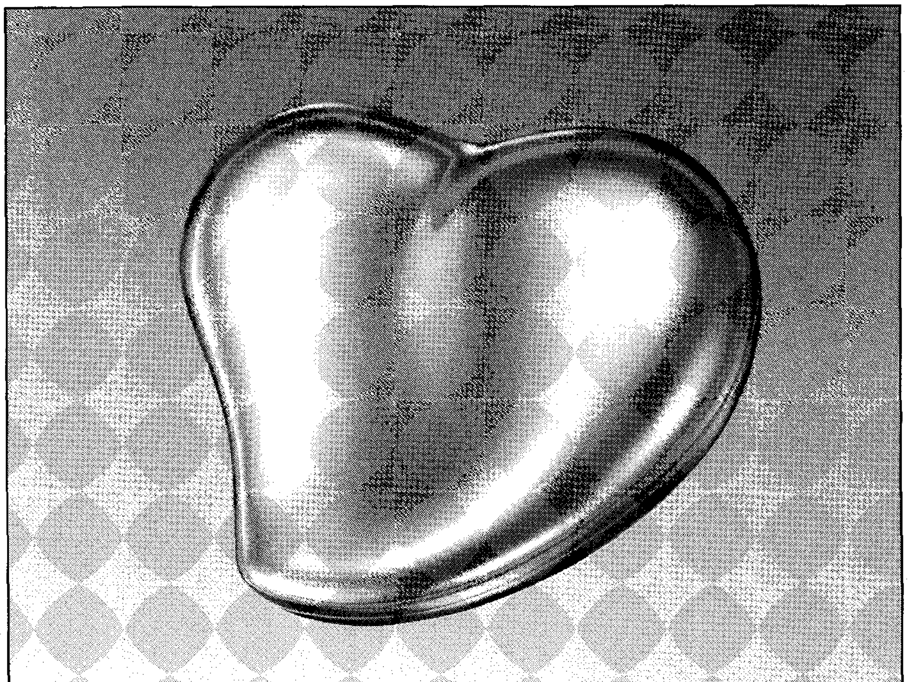
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Mevies.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Embassy.)

Johnny Handsome—Walter Hill directed this hog-wild revenge melodrama, in which Mickey Rourke plays a hoodlum Elephant Man—a deformed boy mocked by the world and forced into a life of crime. Ellen Barkin, in a cartoon performance, is the degenerate slut who jeers the loudest. The only sanity here is in some of the acting. Rourke does a fine, competent job, but the movie is stolen clear away by Morgan Freeman and Forest Whitaker as antagonists—a tough-minded veteran police detective and a warm, idealistic prison doctor. Whitaker believes that if he performs plastic surgery on the kid and makes him handsome he'll go straight. Freeman listens to Whitaker and grins in wonder: how can anyone be this innocent? It's tickling to see the two together; their scenes crackle. Other moments are redeemed by Elizabeth McGovern as a working-class girl, Scott Wilson as Rourke's only buddy, David Schramm as a money launderer, and Raynor Scheine as a gun dealer. Ken Friedman's screenplay (which is based on a novel by John Godey) is a tortuous reworking of Joan Crawford's 1941 vehicle "A Woman's Face" (which was a remake of a Swedish film with Ingrid Bergman); the big change is that the new film's slant is cruelly kinky. (It's as if "A Woman's Face" were redone, with the Crawford character once again surgically transformed and all—only now in the last scene somebody throws acid at her.) Set in New Orleans.—P.K. (10/16/89) (Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center.)

LETHAL WEAPON 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer, and Joss Ackland glowers like Alastair Sim as the head villain, a South African diplomat who smuggles drugs. Also with Patsy Kensit. Jeffrey Boam wrote the screenplay. The score is by Michael Kamen, Eric Clapton, and David Sanborn.—T.R. (West Side Cinema.)

THE LITTLE THIEF—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teen-ager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." Also with Didier Bezace, Simon de la Brosse, and Nathalie Cardone. In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

MADELEINE (1950)—A British film based on the news accounts and court records of the case of a young woman in Victorian Glasgow who was accused of murdering her French lover. The verdict at Madeleine Smith's trial was neither guilty nor innocent; it was "not proven"—and we are left in the same uncertainty. The director, David Lean, has shaped the whole movie for this enigmatic uncertainty, yet the effect is unsatisfying—in fact, numbing—and Lean's moviemaking techniques are so stiff they seem Victorian, too. In the title role Ann Todd (Mrs. Lean at the time)



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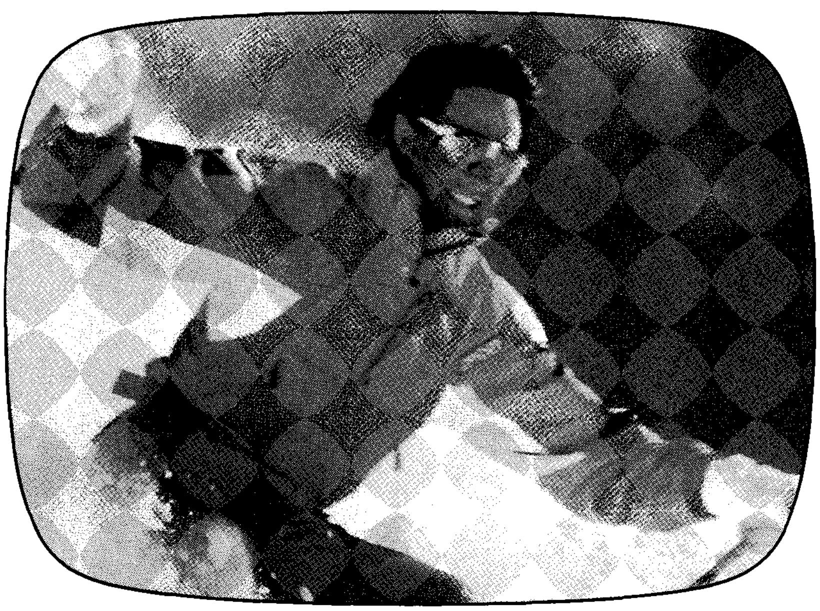

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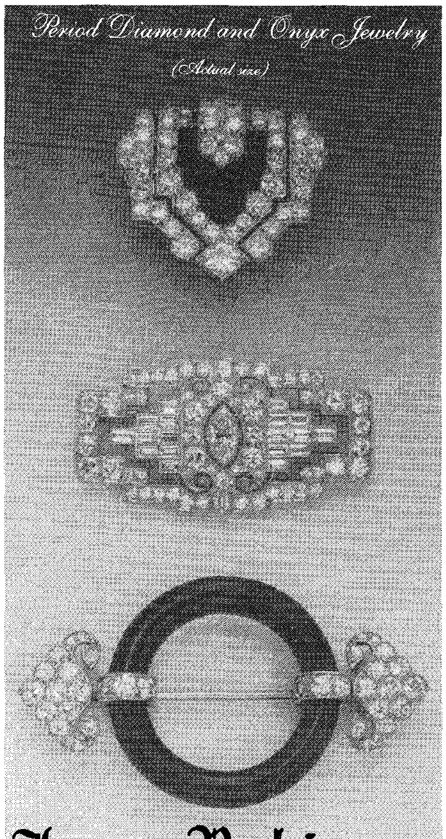

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deliberately emphasizes her own glacial reserve. But she's so rigidly made up that her face looks about to crack. It's an unappealing performance; she was already past forty and too austerely controlled to play the scenes of Madeleine's passionate abandon to the blackmailing Frenchman (Ivan Desny, who's like a foreign-voiced young Orson Welles). With Leslie Banks, Norman Wooland, André Morell, Elizabeth Sellers, Jean Cadell, and Ivor Barnard as the druggist who sells Madeleine arsenic. The humorless script is by Stanley Haynes and Nicholas Phipps.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 26.)

Night of the Living Dead (1968)—It would be fun to be able to dismiss this as undoubtedly the best movie ever made in Pittsburgh, but it also happens to be one of the most gruesomely terrifying movies ever made—and when you leave the theatre you may wish you could forget the whole horrible experience. It's about a night when the dead rise and eat the living; seven people (the most resourceful one is played by Duane Jones) take refuge in a farmhouse, and we watch as the relentlessly marching, hungry corpses come in and tear at them—and we see, in closeup, the devouring of hearts, lungs, entrails. Made by George A. Romero, who photographed and directed on a budget of $114,000. The film's grainy, banal seriousness works for it—gives it a crude realism; even the flatness of the amateurish acting and the unfunny attempts at campy comedy add, somehow, to the horror—there's no art to transmute the ghoulishness.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 31.)

Parenthood—The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is ambitiously constructed, tracing the relationships of several boomer-age parents with their kids, their siblings, and their own parents. The advantage of this arrangement is that none of the characters are onscreen very long: we have time to get sick of only about half of them, and some—especially the nervous, eager dad played by Steve Martin—are fun to watch. The drawback is that the movie has no drive. The dull title captures the tone precisely: the whole thing has been conceived generically, abstractly, and by the end the director, Ron Howard, is rushing from scene to scene tidying up loose ends, to make sure that each little individual drama gets its point across and that they all add up to a correct answer to the essay question "What is parenthood?" The movie tries very hard, but its wisdom is on the forlorn side. Also with Mary Steenburgen, Rick Moranis, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robard, Harley Kozak, Martha Plimpton, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Hulce.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Cinema 3; through Oct. 26.)

A Passage to India (1984)—This admirable version of E. M. Forster's 1924 novel about the tragicomedy of British colonial rule was adapted, directed, and edited by David Lean, who knows how to do pomp and the moral hideousness of empire better than practically anybody else around. He enlarges the scale of Forster's irony, and the characters live in more sumptuous settings than we might have expected. But they do live. Peggy Ashcroft comes through with a transcendent piece of acting as Mrs. Moore, and Judy Davis is close to perfection as the repressed Miss Quested, who longs for adventure; they are the two women whose attempt to get to know the Indians socially results in a charge of attempted rape against Dr. Aziz, played by Victor Banerjee, a fine, fluid actor who's like a piece of erotic sculpture. If Lean's technique is to simplify and to spell everything out in block letters, this kind of clarity has its own formal strength. It may not be the highest praise to say that a movie is orderly and dignified or that it's like a well-cared-for, beautifully oiled machine, but of its kind this "Passage to India" is awfully good, until the last half hour or so. With the exception of Alec Guinness (whose caricature of an inscrutable Brahmin is simply in the wrong movie), the cast is just about irreproachable. It includes James Fox as the dogged liberal Fielding and Nigel Havers as Ronny and also Art Malik, Michael Culver, Saeed Jaffrey, Roshan Seth, and Sandra Hotz as Stella.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 27-28.)

Rebel Without a Cause (1955)—As Jim, a high-school boy, James Dean was the archetypal misunderstood teen-ager in this generation-gap soap opera of the fifties, which had more emotional resonance for the teen-agers of the time than many much better movies. With Natalie Wood as Judy, Sal Mineo as Plato, Corey Allen as Buzz, Nick Adams as Moose, Dennis Hopper as Goon, Jim Backus and Ann Doran as Jim's parents, Virginia Brissac as his Grandma, and William Hopper and Rochelle Hudson as Judy's parents. Directed by Nicholas Ray; written by Stewart Stern and Irving Shulman, based on Ray's story.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 27-28.)

Scandal—Tepid. The director, Michael Caton-Jones, and the writer, Michael Thomas, who dig up the Profumo affair, might have used it as the basis for a satirical slice of history; instead, they've made a sentimental docudrama—one more English film about the cruelty of the class system. What sustains a viewer is the narrative, with its evocative details of life in London from 1959 to 1963—how the teen-age showgirl Christine Keeler (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer), bored with the middle-aged dignitaries that the society osteopath Stephen Ward (John Hurt) introduced her to, took on a West Indian lover and then another West Indian, and how, as a result of a violent quarrel between the two, a newspaperman got on her trail. She then offered up the story of her earlier gentlemen callers, the Tory Secretary of State for War, John Profumo (Ian McKellen), and the assistant naval attaché of the Soviet Embassy (Jeroen Krabbé). And bang! The tabloids whipped up indignation over the decadence of the "Establishment"—over sadomasochism and spies and naked bathing in Lord Astor's pool. Whalley-Kilmer's opaque, unreadable Christine comes to life a bit in her scenes with her showgirl pal, Mandy Rice-Davies, played by Bridget Fonda, who brings a gamine crispness to the role. She's the movie's only wild card. With Daniel Massey, Roland Gift, Britt Ekland, Leslie Phillips, and Trevor Eve.—P.K. (5/15/89) (Art Greenwich Twin, and Worldwide Cinemas; through Oct. 26.)

Sea of Love—This romantic thriller, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, has a simple and rather familiar story: a cop (Al Pacino) investigating a series of murders falls in love with one of the suspects. But the movie isn't entirely predictable; it provides plenty of surprises, odd little riffs that keep us alert. And Pacino is amazing. He's playing a middle-aged, divorced, depressed, semi-alcoholic man who exposes himself to great peril by conducting an affair with a young woman who might be a killer. The actor's face has a saggy, disappointed look now, but there's something hopeful, a wary avidity, in his eyes. In this role, he seems to be startling himself with his own vitality. Barkin is perfectly cast as an ambiguous object of desire; she can look very soft or very, very hard, and the camera doesn't know quite what to make of her. It's a consistently entertaining movie, although Becker's direction has a tendency to flatten the highs in the material. And Price's script, full of sharp dialogue and smart ideas, nevertheless has a few characteristic lapses—most damagingly, a slackening of inspiration toward the end. Also with John Goodman (in good form, as the hero's partner), William Hickey, Richard Jenkins, Christine Estabrook, and Michael Rooker. (The title song, a pop ballad first recorded by Phil Phillips in 1959, is played throughout the movie, and it works beautifully.)—T.R. (9/18/89) (Bijou Cinema, Loews Orpheum, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema, Baronet, Art Greenwich Twin, and Metro Cinema; through Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; starting Oct. 25. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema; starting Oct. 27, tentative.)

sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest: he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Plaza, Waverly, Lincoln Plaza, and Cinema Studio.)

The Shop on Main Street (1965)—An apocalyptic folk tale set in a German-occupied Slovakian village in 1942. A simple, poor carpenter (Josef Kroner) with a nagging wife is appointed by his brother-in-law to be the "Aryan controller" of a button shop run by an aged Jewish woman (Ida Kaminska), and he expects to make his fortune. But the old woman is penniless, has nothing to sell, and is so deaf she doesn't understand that he has come to take over. She assumes he has been sent to be her assistant; he slips into that role, and the two innocents become friends. The story deals with his confusion and spiritual crisis when the Jews are deported. This film has been much honored, though it pulls at the viewer's emotions and its folkishness is laboriously whimsical. Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, who co-directed, allow us to be too aware of the acting; Kroner's impersonation of a "little man" looks like hard work—in the Paul Muni tradition. In Czech.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 29.)

Summertime (1955)—Katharine Hepburn, prim and gaunt as an aging American virgin vacationing in corrupt, sensual Venice, and Rossano Brazzi as a soft, thickening Venetian art dealer who makes love to her. There is an element of embarrassment in this pining-spinster role, but Hepburn is so proficient at it that she almost—though not quite—kills the embarrassment. It's hard to believe that the coming together of a withered puritan and a middle-aged roué would light up the sky with the fireworks that the director, David Lean, provides, but this is one of those overwrought, understated, romantic movies (like Lean's "Brief Encounter") that many people remember with considerable emotion. From Arthur Laurents's play "The Time of the Cuckoo"; with Isa Miranda and Darren McGavin.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 27-28.)

The Wages of Fear (1953)—An existential thriller—the most original and shocking French melodrama of the fifties. The opening sequence shows us a verminous South American village and the Europeans trapped in it; they will risk everything for the money to get out. An oil well three hundred miles away has caught fire, and the oil company offers four of them two thousand dollars each to drive two trucks loaded with nitroglycerine (to explode out the fire) over primitive roads. The four are a Corsican (Yves Montand), a Frenchman (Charles Vanel), an Italian (Folco Lulli), and a German (Peter Van Eyck), and the film is about their responses to the gruelling test of driving the trucks. When you can be blown up at any moment only a fool believes that character determines fate. In this situation, courage and caution are almost irrelevant, and ordinary human responses are futile and archaic—yet nothing else is left. If this isn't a parable of man's position in the modern world, it's at least an illustration of it. Henri-Georges Clouzot directed his own adaptation of Georges Arnaud's novel. His most controversial film, it is also his most powerful; the violence is not used simply for excitement—it's used as in Eisenstein's and Buñuel's films: to force a vision of human experience. In French.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Oct. 29.)

When Harry Met Sally . . .—Rob Reiner's movie, from a script by Nora Ephron, takes a screwball-comedy idea and inflates it like a rubber raft. Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) meet in the late seventies, rub each other the wrong way, and then, after breaking up with their partners, become close friends; all the while, they're conducting a running debate on the question "Can a man and a woman ever be just friends, without sex getting in the way?" It's a Rohmer movie played as a sitcom. Crystal muddles through amiably, but Ryan flounders: the filmmakers give her impossible, unplayable scenes, and all she can do is be adorable. The movie keeps telling us that it's real and truthful and universal. Everything in it seems false. Also with Carrie Fisher and Bruno Kirby.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema, and Waverly; through Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Cinema 3; starting Oct. 27, tentative.)

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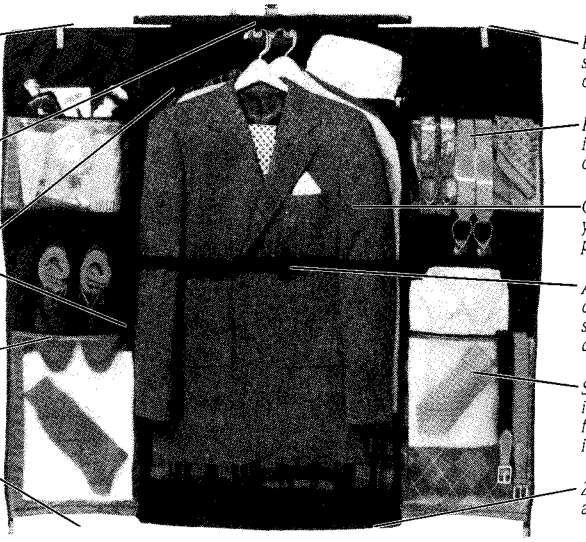

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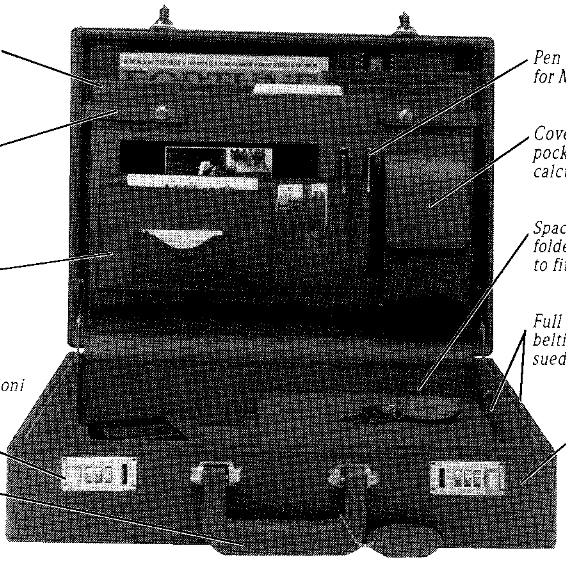

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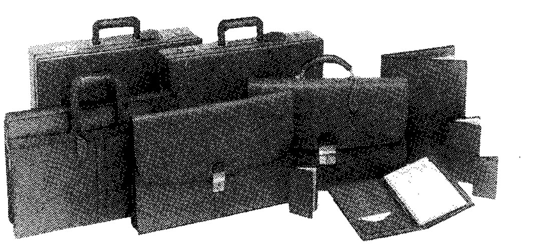

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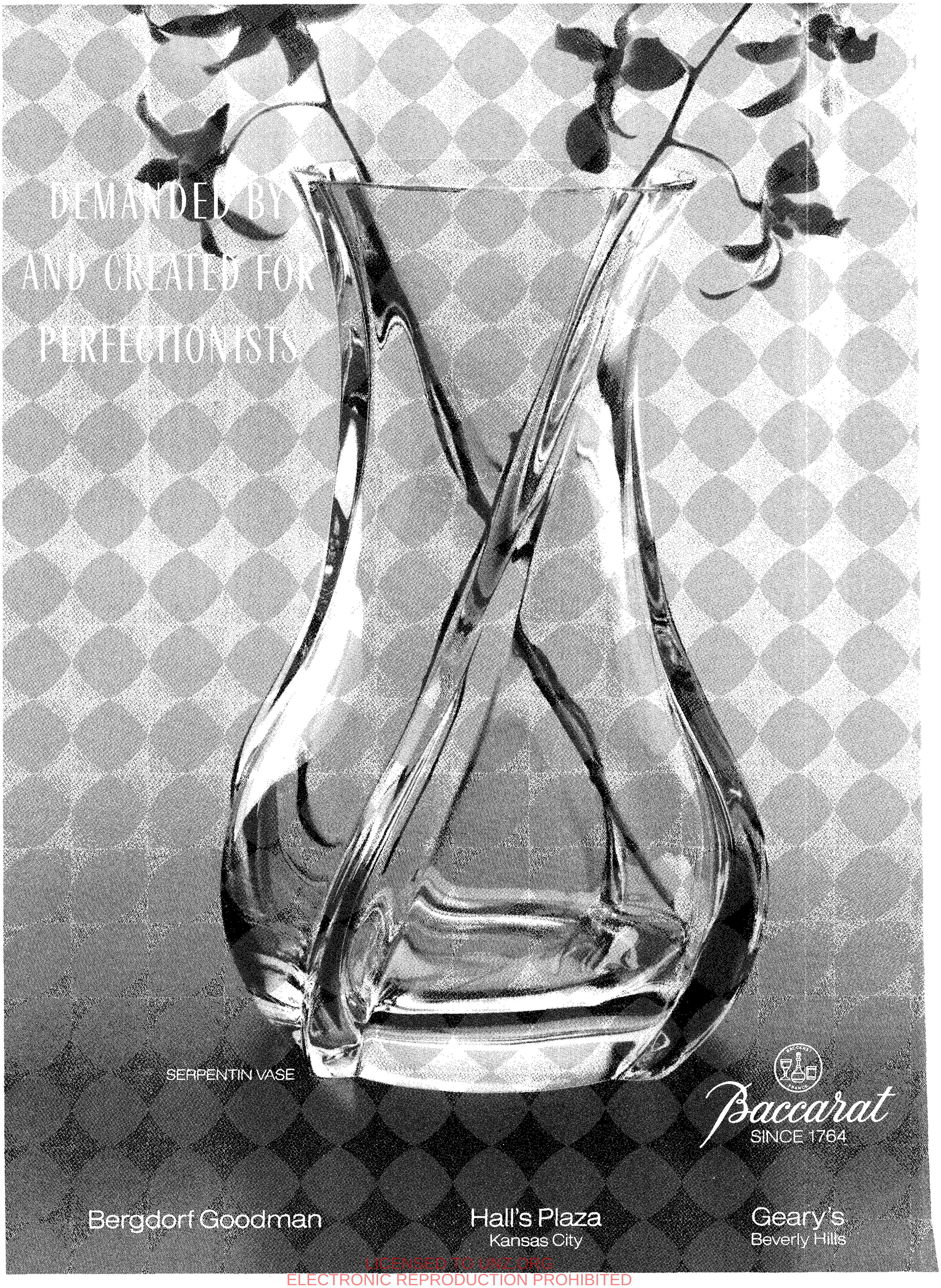

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

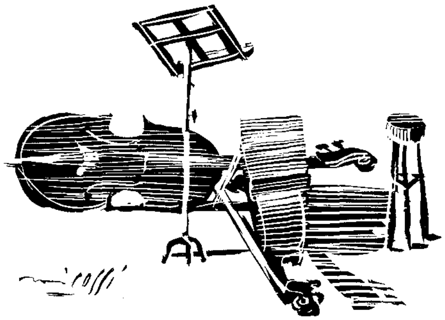
Notes and Comment

BY the time you read this, the hunger strikers in Ralph Bunche Park will have packed up their sleeping bags and abandoned their water-and-salt diet, and almost no one will have paid any attention to them. This month, a dozen Korean-Americans took part in a twenty-two-day fast there, in front of the United Nations. They were protesting, among other things, the presence of forty-three thousand United States soldiers and as many as a thousand nuclear bombs in South Korea; that country's imprisonment of political dissidents; and the forty-one-year-old division of the two Koreas, which one protester called "barbaric." The *Times* published a few lines about the fasters; WBAI broadcast an interview. No other major news organizations showed any interest. In addition to the media's snub, the protesters had to endure the Parks Department's red tape. It's not easy to hold a hunger strike in New York.

The strikers arrived every morning at eight and, with the help of some volunteers, hung a dozen banners along the park's tree-lined railings and near its brushed-steel memorial. They wore the traditional white coveralls of the Korean farmer, and headbands that read, in various languages, "One Korea." They spent a lot of time sleeping side by side on a long mat.

"We try to read, but we do not have much energy," the Reverend Kiyul Chung told us on the morning of October 7th, four days after the strike began. A United Methodist minister from Maryland, he served as the group's spokesman, partly because of his eloquence and partly because of his stamina. "This is the perfect place for a hunger strike," he went on. "People from all over the world come through here. Some of the tourists even take our picture. But the Parks Department has made it very hard. They said we could not spend the night, so we have to leave at 8 P.M. We put up a plastic windbreak, and they made us take it down; they said it is considered a structure, and that is not allowed. But just up the street the Chinese have had a tent and portable toilets for months, with the full support of the city! We are suffering a kind of political oppression here." (He was referring to the Chinese protesters at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, who have staged hunger strikes there on and off since June.) He gave us a few reasons for the Korean strike: "We want the American people to know what the American troops do in Korea; that they cost two billion dollars a year in American tax money; that Korean women are abused near the military bases; that we cannot hope for peace and reunification until the troops are gone; that millions of families have been divided by the D.M.Z., and people cannot write or call each other across it. We hope to speak to the U.N.—that is our dream."

At the edge of the park, a young woman was handing out pamphlets and explaining the strike to passersby. She introduced herself as Seung Yoon, the head of the New York branch of Young Koreans United, which is one of the strike's sponsors. "All the people on the strike are Y.K.U. members from different parts of the country," she told us, and she added, "I am not fasting, but I am here very often. I brought my son." She pointed to one of the sleeping bodies. From under a coat, a boy of about three raised his head; his headband bore some Korean characters. "That writing could mean 'Fatherland Reunification,' or perhaps 'Motherland'—it literally means 'Parents' Land,' " she said.



We asked if she minded the weather, the long hours, the car fumes, and she said, "If I did, I would not complain in front of these people, who are not eating."

A few days later, we returned to attend a press conference. Mrs. Yoon ran up to us as we arrived. "Can you believe it?" she said, her face flushed with anger. "The Parks Department came again—today, of all days. They said we have to take the banners away from the trees and away from the memorial. The United States puts a thousand nuclear bombs in Korea without permission, and we cannot even hang banners here."

The hunger strikers and some volunteers were already moving the banners—laying them flat on the sidewalk or tying them to a police barricade. A priest, Father Joseph Veneroso, joined us as we watched; he had been a missionary in South Korea for twelve years, he told us, and he was helping with the hunger strike. "In a way, it's a good idea to move these banners around," he said. "They'll look new, they'll be more obvious. People are starting to walk by here without seeing us at all."

After a half-hour delay, the press conference began, but no members of the press besides us showed up. One speaker attributed their absence to "the conspiracy of silence among the major

American media on Korean reunification,” and since we don’t like to subscribe to conspiracy theories we tried to come up with some other explanation. We asked Father Joseph what he thought. “Let me put it this way,” he said. “If we’d taken a hostage, for whatever crazy reason, we’d be in the papers every day.”

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Telephone

IT is no fault of John Napoleon La Corte’s that Antonio Meucci has not achieved universal recognition as the inventor of the telephone. Anyone who has ever been involved in more than a just-called-to-see-how-you’re-doing conversation with Mr. La Corte knows that in 1849, when Antonio Meucci discovered the principle that led to the invention of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell was only two years old. It is obviously a source of pride to Mr. La Corte that his pro-Meucci campaign, which he undertook upon immigrating to Jersey City from Sicily, in 1929, is now entering its seventh decade. Each time he has a chance to delineate the specifics—how in the eighteen-fifties and sixties Meucci tried and failed to finance the development of his invention; how in 1871 he received a temporary patent for the first telephone; how he twice renewed the patent but then, in 1874, failed to do so, because he lacked the ten-dollar fee; how Bell just turned up in 1876 and announced the invention of the telephone; how Meucci, embittered, died in 1889—Mr. La Corte gives the impression that he is just warming up.

In Bensonhurst, at the intersection of Eighty-sixth Street, West Twelfth Street, and Avenue U, there is an iron-fenced triangle that has been planted with fresh sod and contains a couple of benches, a maple, two pear trees, and a modest monument. The monument, an upright circular chunk of granite that stands about four feet high, is engraved with the words:

ANTONIO MEUCCI
1808-1889
FATHER OF THE TELEPHONE
FIRST U.S. PATENT CAVEAT 3335
ERECTED A.D. MCMLXXXIX
ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
JOHN N. LA CORTE—FOUNDER
A. OTTAVINO—DONOR

Almost fifty years ago, Mr. La Corte and some friends persuaded the City of New York to designate this wedge of real estate Meucci Square. As landmarks go, it has acquired less celebrity than, say, the much younger A.T. & T. Headquarters, on Madison Avenue. When the monument was installed, last April, Mr. La Corte, who is the founder and honorary chairman of the Italian Historical Society of America, presided over a dedication ceremony. The wrought-iron fence was completed more recently, and Mr. La Corte saw no reason not to honor that installation, too, with a dedication ceremony, so one took place a couple of Sundays ago. At noon, Mr. La Corte and a contingent of the faithful stood inside the fence and posed for photographs. Monsignor Dominic Sclafani, whom Mr. La Corte introduced to a bystander as “the mayor of Brooklyn,” was there to bless the fence, from which a plastic wreath was suspended.

A mobile platform—just large enough to hold the thirty or so politicians, business leaders, and miscellaneous Meuccisti whom Mr. La Corte had recruited for the occcasion—blocked off West Twelfth Street, which, as it happens, runs past a four-story building owned by the New York Telephone Company. The P.S. 58 Marching Concert Band was on hand, as were five Knights of Columbus in full regalia. The program consisted of a series of brief speeches, including one by Representative Stephen Solarz, who said that he intended to do what he could to promote a Meucci postage stamp, “so that the mail would get delivered in the time it takes to make a phone call”—a declaration that earned him a standing ovation. In general, the tributes were divided equally between praise for Antonio Meucci and praise for John La Corte. When Mr. La Corte delivered the main address, he said, “Let the story of the telephone be told from the beginning: we take nothing away from Mr. Bell. He was a good salesman. He was not an inventor.”

A catered reception followed, across Eighty-sixth Street, in the lobby of the New York City Transit Authority Technical Training Center. Several people in the crowd wore lapel buttons that said “BETTER AMERICA 1992 BUILDER.” These referred to another of Mr. La Corte’s projects—the Better World Builders John La Corte Institute, which he is mobilizing for the quincentenary of Columbus’s voyage to the New World. Mr. La Corte is also the founder of the Model Students U.S.A. Better World J. L. Institute, the Genealogical and Heraldic Institute of America, the Brooklyn Hall of Fame, and the sporadically published *Italian-American Review*. Articles in the *Review* tend to focus on Mr. La Corte’s past triumphs, among them his fight to have the bridge between Staten Island and Brooklyn named after the Florentine explorer Giovanni da Verrazano, and his effort to have Columbus Day designated a federal holiday. Somewhat less successful was a crusade Mr. La Corte launched a few years ago in behalf of premarital chastity.

When Mr. La Corte decided to become the honorary chairman of the Italian Historical Society of America, Anna Marie Piluso assumed the title of chairman. Ms. Piluso, whose late father, Thomas Piluso, was, like John La Corte, an insurance broker, told us, “John La Corte is a dynamic personality. He has an imagination that’s unbelievable. We work together very well. We’re both compulsive. If this man had a Ph.D., he’d be dangerous. What would a Ph.D. do? It might help him a little more in fighting the top intellectuals—give him that edge.”

After circumnavigating the lobby a few times and posing for more photographs, Mr. La Corte found time to chat briefly. “The bottom line is that when Meucci died, in 1889, there was a commotion all over Europe that the true inventor of the telephone died without receiving any credit,” he said. “Ten years after Meucci died, my father, Giuseppe La Corte, came to this country to see if he could get some justice for Meucci. He was nineteen years old when he came. He went to see people on Staten Island who knew Meucci, and he found out what had happened. Legally, Bell was entitled, because Meucci didn’t renew the patent. My father said, ‘Give Mr. Bell the money, but give Meucci the credit.’ This is a very, very interesting story for young people to know. There were lots of politics involved in helping Bell get his patent. He had financial backers. Mr. Bell didn't lose a single fight. Money was more powerful than argument. My father returned to Italy in 1913, disillusioned. In 1929, when *I* was nineteen years old, sure enough, *I* came to America. My father said to me, 'John, you're my oldest child, but I let you go to America because you have a mission to fulfill.' You know what happened in 1969, when I went to the phone company with my documentation of what Meucci had done? I said, 'If you want to challenge, here it is.' They said, 'Mr. La Corte, we cannot challenge it. We are not historians. We are here for the shareholders.' "

Anna Marie Piluso wandered by, smiled at Mr. La Corte, and said, "See what I mean about dangerous?"

All That's Left

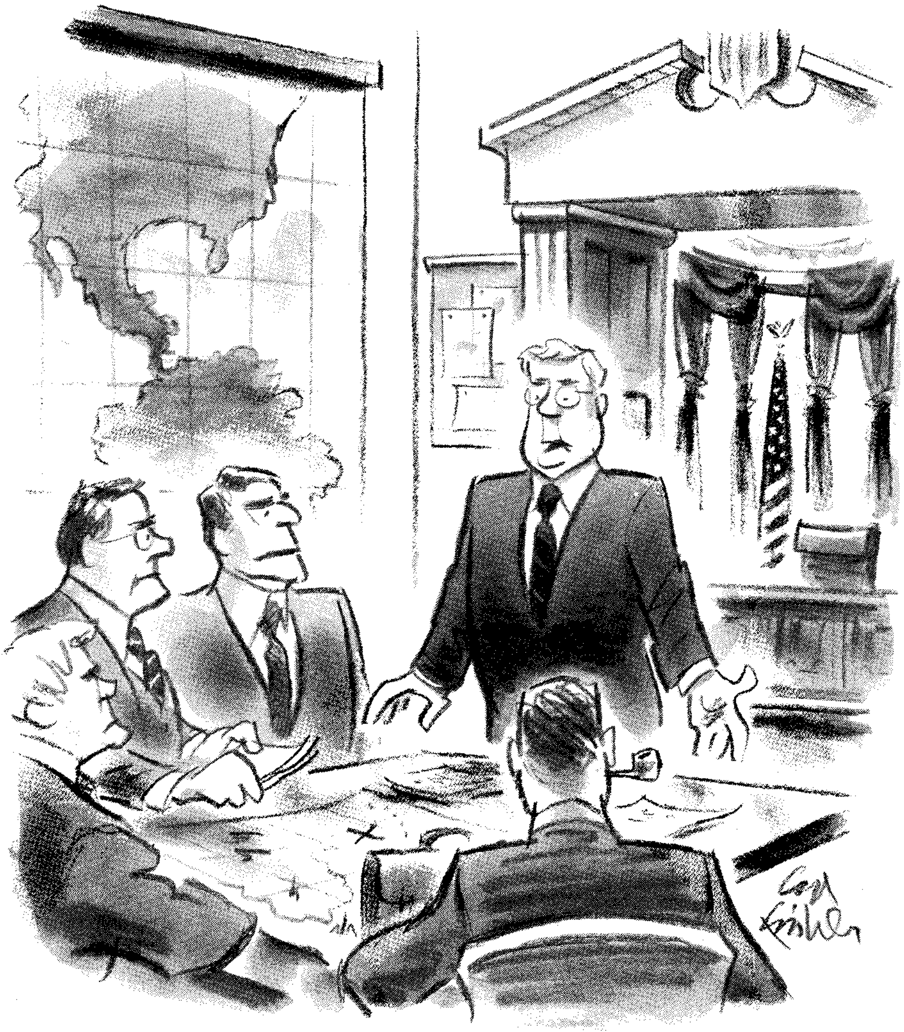
HENRY GALIANO points to the twisted horns of half a dozen impala skulls lying on the floor of his basement stockroom and says, "These are not just bones, you know—this is not just a Halloween joke. This is serious." Then he laughs. "This is natural history. This is a lot of impalas."

Henry Galiano *is* serious, and his store, Maxilla & Mandible, Ltd., on Columbus Avenue, is a serious purveyor of natural history in its raw form: the world's only osteological emporium. Most people notice the skulls and bones first—the entire articulated skeleton of a pony rearing up in one of the street windows, for instance—but the store also stocks beetles, butterflies, seashells, and dried bats. Every specimen is offered as the thing itself, unsentimentalized. Wooden and glass cases display trays of small skulls and rows of larger ones according to class: Mammalia, Reptilia, Insecta. Butterflies march up a section of wall in proper riker mounts, their brilliant colors stark against white. Mr. Galiano makes a point of saying, "We don't do anything with an item that would embarrass the animal. We don't make coats or clock radios or furniture with horns. We're careful to keep the dignity of the animal intact." He doesn't approve of the anthropomorphizing of animals even in the advertisements of conservation organizations trying to solicit donations. "If you don't love it the way it is, you don't really love it," he says.

Mr. Galiano, who is of Chinese-Cuban extraction, was born here, in 1951, grew up in East Harlem, and, without a college degree, worked for fifteen years at his favorite childhood haunt, the American Museum of Natural History, ending up as a curator's assistant in the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology. (A species of sabre-toothed cat is named for him: *Nimravides galiani*.) He also published scholarly papers and built a private collection. He left the museum eight years ago and began selling some of his specimens at flea markets and out of his apartment; six years ago, he established his store, a few blocks from the museum.

He now flies all over the world to convince game wardens and ranchers and animal dealers that he has a legitimate use for their carcasses. Although all his animals are ethically obtained, he must placate customs officials with reams of paperwork. Once the specimens are in the basement, it can take months to prepare them. After the carcasses are skinned and scraped, the bones may be boiled or introduced to a company of carpet beetles. When all the meat is gone, the bones are cleaned, bleached, and sealed. "What we sell is labor," Galiano says.

The eeriest thing about Maxilla & Mandible is not the skulls or the odd smell, which is detectable even upstairs. It is that, despite the avoidance of anthropomorphism, every specimen seems firmly fixed in some human story. The preserved cobras are coiled and rising in striking position, hoods spread, ready for Rikki-Tikki-Tavi; the shells of the pearly nautilus stand near *Spondylus americanus*, a shell found, according to a card alongside, "on wrecks 135 feet off Fla. keys"; and



"Unfortunately, our hands are tied. Congress won't let us take part in any covert operations that will risk global annihilation."

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the picked-clean cattle skulls inevitably suggest Georgia O'Keeffe or "Death Valley Days." The ostrich eggs are displayed in a big wicker basket on a bed of Easter grass, and a placard explains that they are used by African Bushmen as canteens and can hold forty-five fluid ounces. Galiano has a steady supply of them: ostriches are now farm animals.

Fittingly, it is the one animal in the store capable of embarrassment which most lacks dignity. Man (Catalogue No. N212, after "Llama" and before "Marten") is represented by the usual gangly forms, grinning rigidly, each on its own "Human Skeleton Stand" (Catalogue No. SSH 005, which "includes lumbar vertebrae clutch attachment"). One glass case is devoted solely to *Homo sapiens:* articulated hands strung on plastic fish line; the odd thigh bone. As in life, so in death: the skull and mandible of a first-quality male ($775) are worth more than those of a first-quality female ($650). But the skulls and mandibles all look pretty much the same: the bones of the face clustered at the lower front (the teeth thrust out, a lacy fragile escarpment between the eye sockets where the nose eroded); the brain case blooming out behind like an insect's egg sac. The top of the skull can be lifted off like a lid, and fastens back on with the aid of two little brass hooks above where the ears used to be.

Henry Galiano disapproves of the "morbid" interest generated by the human remains in his store, and complains that since the Indian government ended the emigration of any of its deceased citizens to the medical schools and supply houses of the world a few years ago the prices he has to charge for the skeletons he can get are prohibitive. "They'll sit here for five, six months," he says, shaking his head. "The medical world has had no infusion of human material in years. It's a multimillion-dollar market. I was thinking of getting into it myself, but no government will touch it."

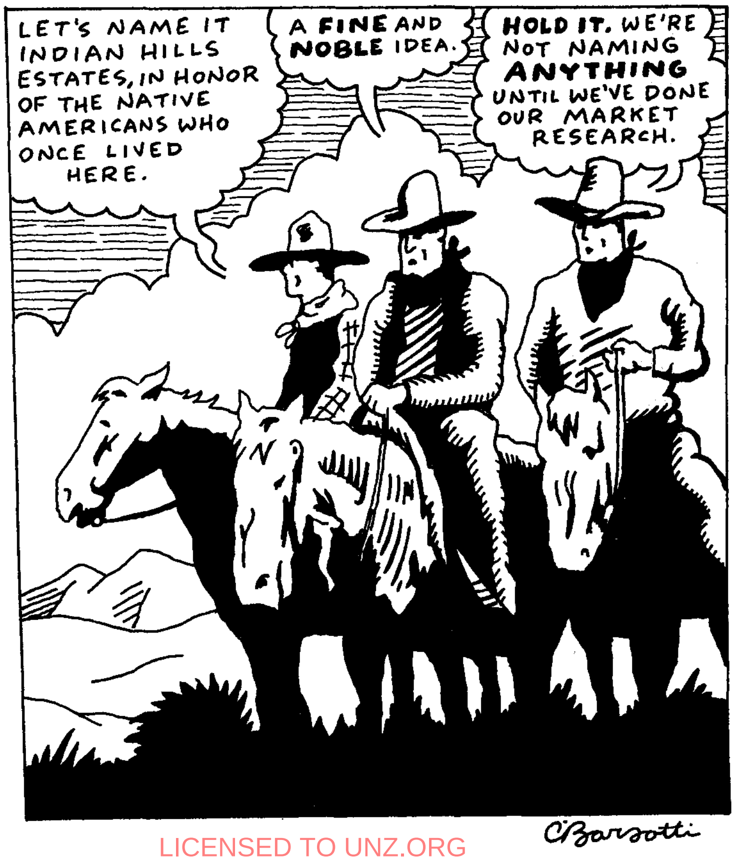
M.M.

A FRIEND writes: At age seventeen, my mother emigrated from one island (Barbados) to another (Manhattan), and she spent many hours in her new land doing things that she had read, mostly in American newspapers and magazines, were the things New Yorkers liked to do—visiting the Empire State Building, going to Radio City, taking tea at the Plaza Hotel, riding on the Staten Island Ferry. What she discovered at those places was that most of the people she met and talked to were not native New Yorkers; mostly, they, too, had come from some faraway place as émigrés, and with the belief that New York was the one city in the world where, if their stories needed to be told, someone would listen. These people said things better, she used to say, than "any half-made-up story t'ing in this or that magazine."

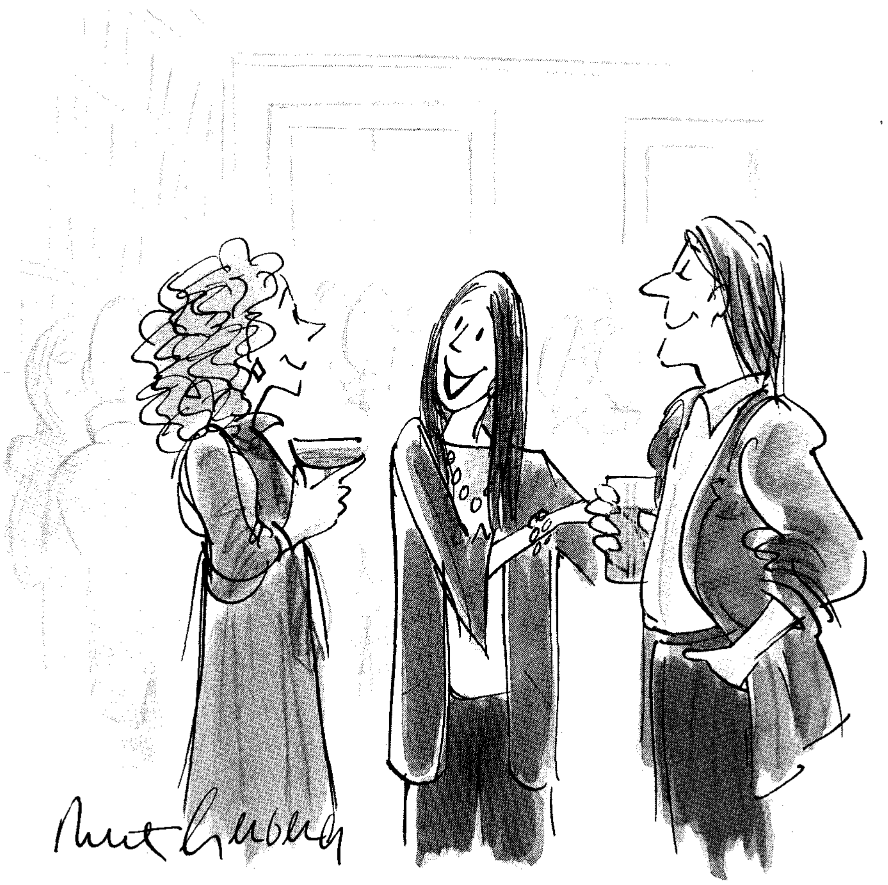
Without much prompting, my mother would tell me stories in her bedroom, in the dark, of people she had met back in the fifties, her voice—melodious and soft and tinged with a West Indian accent—rising and falling in the same way it must have when she talked to the Jamaican son of a follower of Marcus Garvey who did not want to go back to Africa, because he had fallen in love with someone from New Jersey, or the Irish poet who had lived in Braddock, Pennsylvania, and who no longer wrote poetry, because he worked as an assistant to Marlene Dietrich's press agent, and what did poetry matter in the light of Marlene Dietrich's face? On and on my mother's voice would go—it was my imagination's radio, played as I drifted off to sleep. That probably explains a habit I've developed, since my mother's death, of listening to the radio until sleep comes and then, at around 6:30 or 8:30 A.M., on WRKS, to Mama Montego, who always says when she signs off, "Take care, darlin', and walk good."

For those who tune in every weekday morning, Mama Montego is a model of compassionate good sense. A fellow-listener once compared her with "the Op-Ed page in the *Times* and the title character in 'Miss Lonelyhearts.' " I would agree, except that Mama Montego, in the two minutes or two minutes and thirty seconds she is actually on the air, almost always replaces argument or metaphor with what sounds like direct concern. Mama Montego's subject is the listener and the life he or she may lead in a city where, if stories need to be told, someone should listen.

First, there is a voice, a male voice—almost a parody of a "distinguished" baritone—that says, "Scanning the stars, perusing the planets, from the heights of the heavens to the depths of the Caribbean Sea: Ladies and gentlemen, Mama Montego." That voice is immediately followed by a reggae tune—always the same one, light on the ear and rhythmically compelling—which plays under Mama Montego's voice as she says, for example, "I got a nice letter from a lady named Monique in Brooklyn. She say she concern about unity in the black community. She


LET'S NAME IT INDIAN HILLS ESTATES, IN HONOR OF THE NATIVE AMERICANS WHO ONCE LIVED HERE.
A FINE AND NOBLE IDEA.
HOLD IT. WE'RE NOT NAMING ANYTHING UNTIL WE'VE DONE OUR MARKET RESEARCH.
CBarsotti

say she realize dat black people from diverse cultures would like to display deir cultural pride, like, for instance, West Indians and Panamanians and t'ing. But she say sometime she don't t'ink dat many of dese people actin' like dey're black, you know. And she want to point out dat all of us black people and we must unite. Well, darlin', I have a few t'ing I want to say to you. Yes, you are very right, all of us from de same place: Africa. Some of us, you know, dey did drop off early, in de islands, and we end up chopping sugar cane. De rest of us dey did bring to dis country and we end up picking cotton. Either way is de same t'ing, we come from de same place and we have de same history of hardship and suffering. But, darlin', dere is little differences just the same dat we did develop down over the years—for instance, in de music, de way we speak, and sometimes even our way of approachin' certain t'ing. Darlin', we should be proud of both our differences and our sameness. After all, you know, we are not'ing more than branches from de same tree. Dere is enough space for all of us and we should be just as proud of one branch as we are of all of dem. But most of all we should be proud of de root. Take care, darlin', and walk good."



"Tracy, this is Gene. He also read the Nancy Reagan book in unbound galleys."

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There are several things about Mama Montego's voice that make it distinctive. One is her Jamaican accent, with its hard "t"s and "g"s and its flat "a"s—sounds that make the pronunciation of her favorite word, "darlin,'" very different from, say, a country-and-Western musician's. Then, there is the matter of her age, which Mama Montego has never revealed, but which she suggests sometimes by the way she pauses in her speech, as in: "Hallo, darlin' [slight pause]. Michael Jackson say [slightly longer pause, followed by a barely perceptible intake of breath], he say dat [pin-drop pause] Elizabeth Taylor de only woman for him [fractionally longer pause]. Why him so foolish? Him did never hear from you [exhale, no pause] dat Mama is a vision?"

Freddi Rodriguez, who does the broadcast, considers herself "simply the voice behind Mama Montego's spirit," and certainly she bears no resemblance to one's early-morning imaginings of Mama Montego. Freddi Rodriguez has a full head of hair; Freddi Rodriguez sometimes wears glasses with oversized designer frames but never spectacles with square frames; Freddi Rodriguez does not walk with a limp or carry a cane, nor does she sit with a microphone and a live audio hookup in a sugarcane field that stretches as far as the eye can see.

"I prefer that Mama and I remain a mystery. And one of the reasons I prefer that we do is that she—I always refer to Mama as 'she'—gets a lot of crank mail from people who don't like what she has to say." Freddi Rodriguez ("That's Freddi with an 'i,' not a 'y.' At thirteen, I thought I'd be different") told me all this in the recording booth where Mama Montego tapes her messages. "Mama Montego is based on my grandmother, who kind of raised me and actually was Jamaican. She was very feisty. My mother, who listens to Mama every day, sometimes disagrees with her in the way that she disagreed with her own mother—which is funny, considering that I'm her daughter. My mother taught me about listening. She said that there are a lot of sad things in creation but one of the saddest is not having someone out there who cares to listen. I know it's true, because I started doing Mama Montego as filler—we had some extra time before the news—and now she's the only thing some people tune in to listen to. Recently, a young girl wrote to Mama Montego and said she was thinking about harming herself, everything was so terrible. I couldn't help it—I stepped out of character. No, not on the air—after. I phoned her as myself and we had a good cry. Now we're friends. I can't help getting involved. When I had my own radio show in Jamaica, a long time ago, someone in the government called in anonymously—ha, ha—and threatened to bomb the station. Just because I spoke out on injustice. Well, I'm a New Yorker, after all—I couldn't help it. My grandmother and mother couldn't help it; neither can I. When I look at my baby daughter and she's being particularly quarrelsome with me about something she doesn't want to do, or when she smiles and listens in a particular way, I say, 'Uh-huh, why, yes,' just like Mama."

IN A WAR

WHEN Lily Quale was fourteen, stockings were hard to come by, because we were in a war and factories were dressing soldiers. She colored her bare legs with pancake makeup, some of which always rubbed off on the edge of her skirt. Recently she had taken up with a Polish girl, a few years older, twice expelled from convent schools. She taught Lily how to draw a fake seam with eyebrow pencil and explained a few other matters usually left obscure in Catholic Quebec.

Lily's mother showed a cold face to the girl who knew such a lot. She didn't think well of me, either, although I knew hardly anything that might interest Lily.

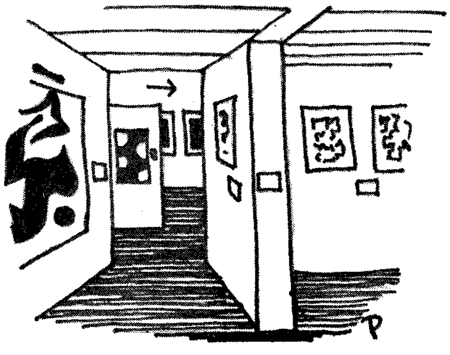
"You and Lily are too big to be natural company for each other now," her mother said one Saturday afternoon, when Lily and I were sitting in the Quales' kitchen, on the excuse of doing homework. I was a year ahead, writing an essay on how railways helped the Industrial Revolution, while Lily tried to disentangle the reasons for the American Civil War. We barely knew that Canada had a history. "She ought to be with a girl her own age," Mrs. Quale went on, "and you, Steve, you'd be better off with another boy. And I don't want the two of you going upstairs to study in Leo's room unless I'm in the house."

That was how adults saw things then: simply. Catholic-Protestant stories, all bad luck, lay strewn around us, the rocks and bricks of separation. Why let anything go too far between two kids who were bound to separate? The town we lived in straggled along both sides of the Châtelroux River. There was no core to the place except a huddle of stores around the French church, with its aluminum-painted roof and spire. The Quales were in bungalow territory, Catholic and English-speaking—everyone's minority. The last thing they looked for was trouble. My aunt had a house on the opposite shore, facing the river. We had a dock and a rowboat and a canoe. We had French-Canadian neighbors, working a strip farm, and English-Canadian acquaintances living in houses like ours, farther down the road, toward the bridge and railway station. We had a wide lawn and an enclosed back yard, and a low hedge of shrubs with red berries, and a covered gallery running around three sides of the house. We did not keep a cat, because my aunt thought cats were hypocrites, and we gave up keeping a dog after Snowy drowned and Rex was poisoned. My parents were Anglican missionaries in China; my Aunt Elspeth was bringing me up.

I knew even then that Mrs. Quale was mistaken about Lily. She could never have wanted a close girlfriend. The Polish chum was just a handbook she studied for expertise. Lily kept a large pond stocked with social possibilities, nearly all boys, and thought nothing of calling me on a Saturday if some other happy chance had let her down. My aunt, hearing my end of the negotiation, would dub me a human jellyfish; but one of the things adults forget is how complete younger people seem to one another, how individual and clearly defined. It is the grown person who looks evasive and blurry, who needs to improvise. Lily to me was without shadow: I took it for granted she worked her arrangements with hook and reel. My easygoing response was more toughly snobbish, and so more injurious to Lily, than my aunt could guess. Probably, I thought well of myself for letting Leo Quale's little sister get away with murder.

Before that time, when I was still in seventh grade—in those days known as Junior Fourth—my aunt remarked that it would be good for someone like me, raised by a woman, to have a stalwart figure of some kind to look up to. I thought about Lily, and the scale of her nerve, and how she learned the uses of gall from watching her brother Leo, and I said, "You mean like Leo Quale?"

"Leo has certain qualities," said my aunt, as if he had barely escaped hanging. "It was more a gentleman I had in mind—say, like Mr. Coleman."

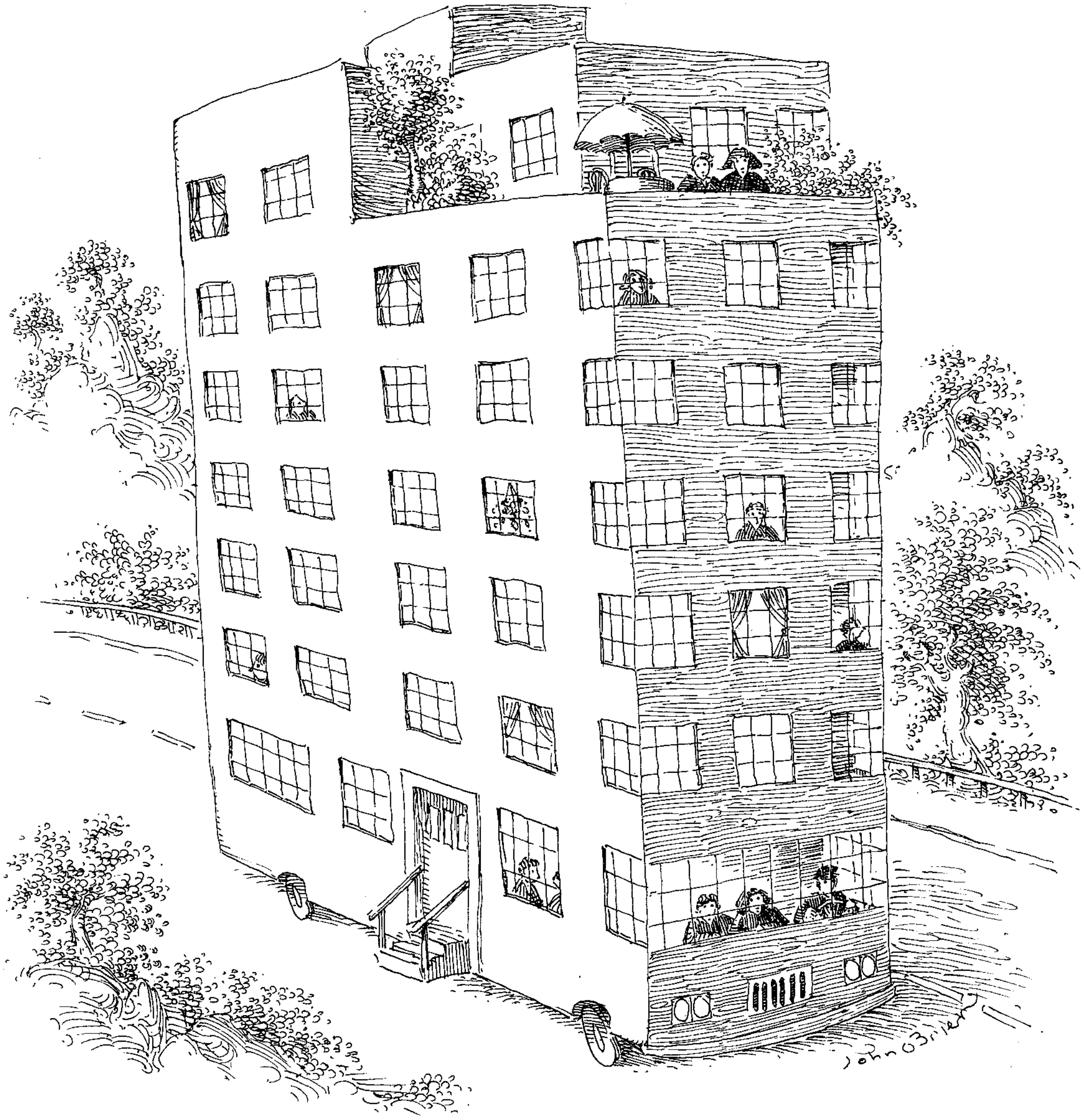


She was defining a stage of growth as well as a caste. It is true that at fifteen Leo was too advanced to make a friend of me, but he was still too immature to offer paternal advice about sexual prudence and financial restraint. (My aunt actually believed fathers can do this.) She began to think well of him later that year, after running out of other models for me. To my aunt the male nature was expected to combine the qualities of an Anglo-Canadian bank manager and a British war poet, which means to say a dead one. Folded inside the masculine psyche there had to be a bright yearning to suffocate face down in a flooded trench, to bleed from wounds inflicted by England's enemies, even to be done in by a septic flea bite, if a patriotic case could be made against the flea.

Leo showed that eagerness to perish: enlist, ship overseas, never be heard from again. He was heavy and blond, a kind of Viking, one of the thick ones, out of dark small parents, Glasgow Irish on both sides. It had taken him six years to flounder through his last three grades, and he was now becalmed in eighth. He could read, he could even work complicated sums in his head, but he could not write a complete sentence. My aunt blamed his school, which also happened to be mine: Leo should have had Catholic teachers. All these years he had felt bewildered, unwanted, could not focus his intelligence. A memory of Leo—placid, sleepy, too big for his desk—stands next to my aunt's appraisal.

After school and all day Saturday he delivered groceries to English customers, on both sides of the river. Sometimes he made four or five trips along the same street—particularly Fridays, when there was a rush on beer. Quebec was the only part of Canada where beer could be sold by a grocer, instead of in a government liquor store. We owed the privilege to the twists and snarls of Catholic morality, said my aunt, who drank only sherry.

Leo and my aunt were expecting a war, well ahead of world leaders. "Ah, it'll come, all right," he would assure her, lowering a box of provisions from his shoulder to the kitchen table. "And we'll be in it. Don't you worry, Mrs. Cope. We need a good old war to sort us out."



"I'm afraid you're right, Leo. War brings out the best in men and nations, but we have to remember the fallen and the missing, and sometimes there is injustice, too."

"It's them or us," said Leo. "England forever!" He sounded a bit crazy. He couldn't have heard it at home: his father hated the English.

What did my aunt mean by "missing," I used to wonder. How did you know you were missed? I had never missed my parents, and their letters showed no longing to see me but simply told me to be good. People in Châteauroux, when they talked about the last war or the next, said, "You've got to die sometime." In St. George's Anglican Church my aunt and I droned in unison that we believed in the resurrection of the body, though common evidence spoke against such a thing. Leo may have seen a brief future in the Army as an improvement over the immediate prospect, stuck in a classroom where he was a head taller than his teacher. Perhaps he was just exercising his native talent for saying whatever might appeal. He once boasted to my aunt that, at thirteen, he had tried to join the Mac-Paps—the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Canadians fighting Franco. It was no more preposterous than his father's claim to have played rugby for Ireland: Mr. Quale was built like a jockey and had never been outside Quebec.

You expected people like the Quales to be undersized. They descended from immigrants known to other British incomers as "Glasgow runts." The term has vanished: it takes only two generations, no time in real time, to acquire strong teeth and large hands and feet and a long backbone. Only aversions and fears, the stuff of racial memory, are handed down intact.

To recall the Quales around their supper table, with the radio turned right up, three or four saucepans bubbling on the stove, everyone eating something different, Mr. Quale yelling back at the radio during the news broadcast, laying down the law on England, or Quebec politics, or the Spanish Loyalists ("Every last man a louse" did for them all) is to see in deep perspective the Gorbals of Glasgow, where their parents had started out, and farther away, thin on the horizon, the trampling of Ireland. Mr. and Mrs. Quale belong to the first race of Irish, black-haired, driven underground, their great gods shrunk to leprechauns. Leo is the Norse marauder, hopelessly astray in the dark. Lily seems delicate, at least to the eye, with pale fine hair: a recent prototype, if you count in centuries.

Weekdays Mr. Quale got up at five and took the train to Montreal, where he was a plainclothes officer on the police force. He did not know French but could cause the arrest of people who did not understand English. Usually he came back in the middle of the afternoon and sat on a bench outside the railway station reading the Montreal *Star* until about five, the Quales' suppertime. Their neighbors said Old Lady Quale gave him no peace to read the crime news at home. She thought a husband was supposed to keep moving, emptying the water pan under the icebox, examining for short circuits the loops of wiring that hung in fronds all over the house.

She had eyes that were fierce and round, and with her flat face and little beaked nose made me think of an owl. She screamed at children who walked on her lumpy, dried-up flower beds, at drivers who parked delivery vans in front of her door; but there were days on end when she had nothing to say, and peered out of some private darkness to the light. Then, all at once normal again, in whatever degree any Quale normality could amount to, she would start to predict the family future. It was as if she had been granted a vision during her silent trance. Lily was going to be in trouble at an early age. ("In trouble" meant unmarried and pregnant. As Lily was believed not to know how pregnancy started, the prophecy had to be left to drift, like a canoe with nobody in it.) Leo could expect a career of panhandling in downtown Montreal. Mr. Quale was sure to be fired from the police force, for inertia, while Mrs. Quale was promised an old age of taking in washing.

Hearing it, the children went on eating their supper, unmoved. Family conversation usually slanted in a single direction. "You'll see I was right!" and "Believe you me, one day you'll wish you'd listened!" and the shadowy, the mysterious "Remember me when the time comes." Unlike most parents on their street, the Quales did not beat their children, but they kept saying they ought to, and that the kids were asking for it. Any day now Mrs. Quale would take the broom to them and Mr. Quale start swinging the buckle end of his belt. Leo believed it might happen, though he could have knocked his father down with a shove; Lily, who was intelligent, did not.

NOSTALGIE DE LA BOUE

They took away the changeable sky, all that bad weather,
Took away the sun rising and climbing, shimmering and setting,
And gave him his favorite color always and a constant temperature,
Seventy-one degrees Fahrenheit, adjusted upward in the case of wind.
They took away the hate and love that had plagued him so,
The appetites that drew him by the nose, the idea of revenge,
Told him he could grow up now, that such concepts were undignified,
Were undeserving of the tremendous thing that was happening
now on earth.
When the first notes of the overture sounded, the ideal all
composers had struggled toward,
They instructed him to put those thoughts away, all that homesickness
and outmoded memory,
All that claptrap and paraphernalia, that obsessive interest
in the self.
Because it didn't matter anymore what the wailing sounded like,
Now that the ragweed was resurrected and the positrons were
back in place;
Now that all energies were evenly distributed
Nobody cared any longer about the future or what light
might look like on the stone;
No one wished to hear the bedtime stories told again,
Now that the final, ecstatic, inhuman celebration had begun.
But there, amidst that indistinguishable blaze,
He missed his own blue sky, its wild suggestion,
Missed the iciest rainfall sweeping from the clouds,
And missed his heartache, too, his hope deferred;
As the triumph of so much perfection was announced,
He wished even for the dark ferries moving slowly through the dawn,
Wanted back those flowered barges gliding silently to nowhere,
Oh, he longed for those black boats most of all.

—George Bradley

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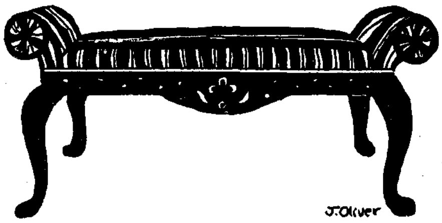
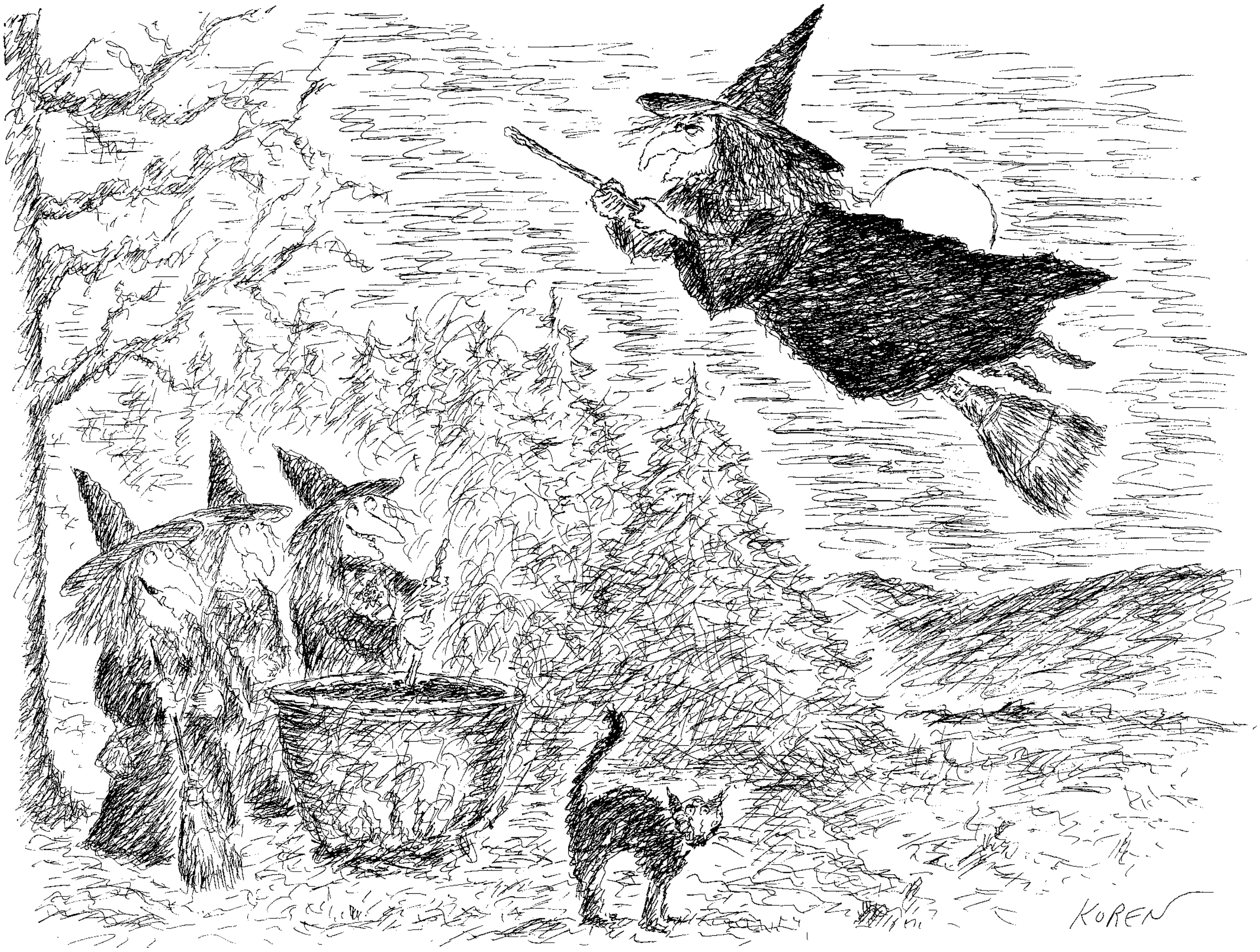
Mr. Mitchell Coleman, elected by my aunt to be an example for me, had to resign from the prep school in Montreal where he taught English and art. She passed on the news in a cluster of baffling remarks: it was a great shock to his friends, he had betrayed a trust, he had to live with his conscience, only God could judge, and he would never set foot here again.

I thought he had pilfered something. It was the worst I could imagine as adult bad behavior. My aunt had a friend who borrowed small objects. (We never said "stole.") Her husband would go through her handbag at night and find an ivory carving, a butter knife, a china soap dish. I was not expected to have opinions about grown people. Once, I had imitated Mr. Coleman's way of standing in front of a bookcase, reading titles in an undertone, and my aunt had reproached me for mocking a man of moral worth, whose very friendship confirmed our own decency. Now she was in a close predicament, needing to let me know he had fallen and at once describing and concealing the nature of the fall.

Dilemmas of upbringing were often referred to my father, whose delayed seaborne answer was likely to be "Have it out with him." Having it out terrified her. She gave me a glass of ginger ale and three squares of cocoa fudge on a bread plate and made me sit down in the parlor, facing her but at a distance. I ate the fudge, then the crumbs. Meanwhile she said that Mr. Coleman's badness was an example of reality. Until now, "reality" had meant having no money. In her way she was as deft at dealing out a bleak future as any parent across the river. Poverty and high principle seemed to occupy the same terrain—to my mind, a vacant lot. I knew some of the discourse by heart: my father was unlikely to amass any capital out in China; one day I might have nothing to fall back on but a clean reputation. Better to run out of worldly goods than the world's good opinion, she said, never having been faced with the choice.



What was she trying to tell me? She knew, but wished she had a man there to take over the notes and deliver the lecture. It was for my benefit that she invited so many inspirational male figures to meals. Her generation of women attached no secondary meaning



"She's a classic."

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to "confirmed bachelor" or "not the marrying kind." Some men got along without a wife. English novels were full of them. Occasionally one of those bluff and taciturn heroes got tired of eating cold suppers and let himself be overtaken by a fresh-faced, no-nonsense country girl. That was fiction: in the real world homosexuality was a criminal offense, liable to a sentence in a penitentiary. For that reason, scores of thoroughly unmarriageable men had to let themselves be seen as a catch, without getting caught. My aunt was a social godsend, for she was attractive and kind, a widow who did not want to remarry ("Steven wouldn't like it"), and, apparently, bleached of desire. At least, she sent none of those coded messages over the female telegraph, meant to be deciphered only by selected men. Or, perhaps she sent explicit signals and was puzzled because no answer came. Or, owing to the amazing boundlessness of ambiguity, may have received more replies than anyone guessed.

At the time I am telling about, she was calm and cheerful, wore her glossy hair parted in the middle, had a supply of single acquaintances described as brainy, therefore harmless, masculine by denomination and ego, willing to take the train or drive down from Montreal, receive one glass of dark sherry, eat a well-done roast and Yorkshire pudding, and put up with me.

Boyd McAllister arrived in a roadster that had the shine and color of a new chestnut. I climbed into the rumble seat, by way of a step the size of a piano pedal, and he took me for a spin along the river. My aunt shamed me by calling, "Don't fall in!" Ray Archer turned up slightly drunk, wearing a kilt, and got just his food: no sherry. Later, my aunt said he had no right to a clan tartan, not even on his mother's side. Herbie Dunn, just back from London, had seen Jack Buchanan singing and dancing, wearing a top hat. He gave my aunt a Buchanan record, "I'm in a Dancing Mood." We played it on the gramophone and he showed us some steps.

"Now, Steven, watch Mr. Dunn," my aunt said, as if this, too, were part of a virile education.

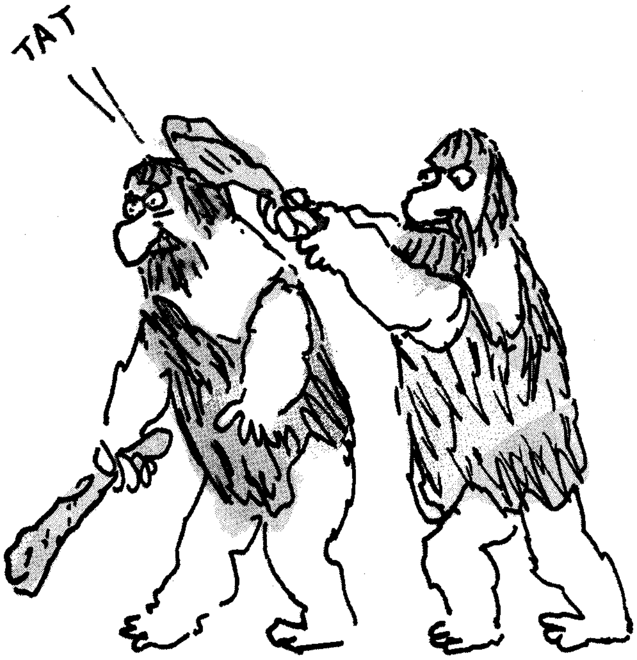
But the pleasures of adults are unbecoming. I looked out the parlor window, to the road and the river. More people walked than drove. There were French-Canadian boys dressed for Sunday, stiff and buttoned-up, and a few Anglos throwing sticks for their dogs. The English had on comfortable weekend clothes. To the French, they looked like hand-me-downs. "If you didn't know who they were, you'd hand them a nickel," our farmer neighbor once said. The river was the color of thin maple syrup. On the far side, in a spread of bungalows, was my Protestant school and the deep Catholic mystery of Lily and Leo.

In those days people owned just a few clothes, no more than they needed. A garment was part of one's singularity. Our teachers put on the same things day after day—the same dress, the same shoes, the same crumpled suit. Leo *was* his plaid shirt and navy-blue sweater, Lily her red coat and knitted leggings. She pulled the leggings off when she got to school, revealing white cotton stockings, and draped them over the radiator, along with other snowy outfits. We were four grades to a room; the smell of the class was of wool drying. Whenever Lily tore her white stockings or got them dirty her crazy mother would scream, "I'll whip you, Lily Quale, I swear to God!," but Lily took no notice.

Mitchell Coleman came to Sunday dinner in blazer and flannels, a white shirt, and a striped tie, gray and maroon. He probably had been cautioned from childhood to be neat and clean, even where it didn't show, in case he got knocked down by a streetcar and had to be carried to the Royal Victoria Hospital and undressed by strangers. With his exactly combed sandy hair, his jacket and trousers uncreased even after a train ride, he was ready for every kind of accident except the one he ran into.

I make him sound set and congealed, but he was in his early twenties, a local poet of the schoolmaster breed. He offered my aunt stapled, mimeographed editions of his work—long spans of verse in which Canada sprawled forbiddingly (nothing enticing about the national posture) between two bleak alternatives, the United States and the frozen North. I realize now that he was an early nationalist, a term that would have been as meaningless to my aunt as "reality" was to me. Her Canada was a satellite planet, reflecting the fire of English wars, English kings and queens, English habits and ways. My uncle had been killed at Ypres. The men she summoned to dinner matched in age the young officer in the sepia photograph in her bedroom.

Alone with me, in mock after-dinner conversation, Mr. Coleman looked elderly and oppressive. My aunt would leave us so that he could tell me about ideals heritable by men—apparently a richer legacy than any endowed on women. I could hear her in the dining room, clearing the table. She would not come to my rescue until it was time for Mr. Coleman to catch a train back to Montreal. He lived in a two-room apartment in the basement of a stone house on Bishop Street. His windows were just under the ceiling: looking up, he could watch the boots and shoes of strangers going by. It cost him twenty-two dollars a month, which my aunt said was high. That was all we knew about his private arrangements.



The instant she left the room he would stand up, facing the bookcase, with his back to me.

"Read Dickens?"

"Aunt Elspeth reads 'A Christmas Carol.' "

"Aloud, at Christmas?"

"Yes, sir."

"Read Kipling?"

"When we have to."

"At school?"

"Yes, sir."

"You've read the Henty books, I suppose?"

"We've got some that used to belong to my uncle."

"Good. They're good stuff. Read any poetry?"

"When we have to."

"What do they make you read? British? American? Any Canadian?"

"I wouldn't know, sir."

He told my aunt that bringing civilization to children was like throwing rose petals at a moving target.

"Some of the petals stick," she said. "I'm sure some do." She looked at me, as if wishing I would stop dodging.

If optimism is the prime requirement for teaching, she was a born educator. Mr. Coleman seemed to attract defeat and may have been in the wrong line altogether, on several counts. For one thing, whatever the scope of his personal adventures, he absolutely hated small boys. But when my aunt unfolded his disgrace, or thought she had, small boys were on her mind. She wanted to know if he had ever made a clear, coarse suggestion while standing in her parlor, reeling off names of authors. I did not know what she was getting at, and was merely thankful to hear he was never coming back. Her assurance that his failure was God's business meant that one more fragment of disorder had been added to the mess in Heaven.

"It may be for the best that it has come to light," she said, encouraging me to speak up. It was her second attempt, after the dead try over cocoa fudge. This time I was pushing a lawnmower around the back yard, earning my allowance. She sat on the back step, on a straw cushion usually kept in the hammock.

"Are you just as glad?"

"What about?"

"About not having to see Mitchell Coleman anymore."

I was just as glad, which condemned him. On his last visit he had sneered at her taste in books.

"She's reading Depression novels," he had said. "And now this thing." He pulled it off the shelf. " 'The Case of Sergeant Grischa.' Not a lady's book. I'd like to know how it got here, right next to"—he paused to make certain—" 'To the Lighthouse.' "

"Leo Quale read it," I said. "He says it's the best book anybody ever wrote."

"Do you know what it's about?"

"Yes. He told me. They shoot him."

"Your friend Leo?"

"No, the sergeant. He's supposed to be a deserter, so they shoot him."

"Don't take it to heart. It's only a story. Most of us die in bed."

He sounded simpler, easier—too late. My side of the exchange closed down. It was all right with me if we hated each other, as long as my aunt didn't know.

Better a reticent kid than one suddenly cold. He sensed the change—he was not a teacher for nothing—and began to speak at random, as if we shared the same tastes and the same age: "Arnold Zweig. I wonder if he and that other Zweig are brothers, like the two Manns." Did he really think I could tell him? "She's read it, too," he said, showing me how the book fell open in his hands.

Later on, I discovered it opened to passages that my aunt, or Leo, may have liked in particular. The core of her mind, or Leo's, contained more anxiety than anyone guessed. One of the two had lingered over the short truth that death means dying. Only someone with great denseness of spirit needs to be reminded, so I suppose the steady reader to have been Leo.

RELEASED from eighth grade, Leo became free to carry groceries full time. He set a box down in our kitchen and made the remark that we seemed to live on cereal. His habit of uttering one pointless thing after the other had my aunt believing he had plenty to say but lacked a sense of direction.

"Your parents must be paying Catholic-school tax, Leo," she said to him. "Why weren't you in a Catholic school?"

"You have to take a bus. My sister Lily pukes in buses."

"There are two Catholic schools here in the town."

"They're both French."

"What of it? It isn't too late for Lily to change. She could learn French, and she'd be with her own kind. We often see the little Chartrand girls going by, wearing their uniforms. They look so sweet, all in black."

Leo stared at the demented lady who did not know there were Catholics and Catholics. He made a stab at saner conversation, and asked if this was an old house.

"Fairly old," said my aunt, smiling. She did not want to make the tenant of a raw bungalow feel ill at ease.

"About a hundred years?"

"Perhaps more."

"Did you always live here?"

"It was a summer home," said my aunt. "But when I had Steven—I mean when Steven came to stay with me—I decided to bring him up in a house instead of an apartment."

"We move a lot," he said—I think with pride.

The Quales were not rich or poor enough to stay put. They kept packing and unpacking their bedsteads and their chamber pots and the family washtub. Each move was decided for the better, but they still had to pump cold water and cross a back yard to a privy. There was the same glassed-in cube of a veranda around the front door and storm porch at the back. The storm porch, a storage shed made of unpainted planks, was meant for brooms and pails, old newspapers, overshoes, rubber boots, stray scarves and mittens, jam jars without lids, hockey sticks. It was the place where the Quales shed snow from their outdoor clothes and where Leo sat down on a broken chair to take off his skates.

Sometimes when he got up in the morning, Mr. Quale would find a hobo sleeping on the floor, under a strip of carpet. "God alone keeps tramps from freezing to death," he would say aloud, as he heated the rest of last night's soup for the man. No one was ever turned away: the magic of retribution could transform any workingman into a vagrant. While the stranger drank his soup, Mr. Quale pretended to sort newspapers, so he wouldn't make off with the bowl. If Lily came out, with her nightgown stuffed inside her woollen leggings, and her coat around her shoulders, on her way to the privy, Mr. Quale would order her back to her room until the man had disappeared. Sitting on the edge of her bed, she could hear them exchanging neutral opinions about good and bad times. The only thing Mr. Quale ever offered, other than soup, was a pair of old skates that hung by their tied laces from a rusty nail.

"Can you use these skates?" he would ask.

"I don't think so. Thanks all the same."

In every Châtelroux household there were skates that seemed to have arrived on their own, and that no one could wear. Ours were attached to the lock of a shutter. Every so often my aunt unhooked the skates and examined them. "Steven, are you sure they aren't yours?"

"They're miles too big."

"Well, they certainly don't belong to me."

"Somebody must have left them behind."

"I suppose so. I wish he'd come and take them back."

She tried to fob them off on Leo. He took one look and said, "Gurruls'."

"Girls' skates, Leo? Are you sure? Perhaps your mother could try wearing them, or Lily. Lily would have to grow into them, of course."

"Lily doesn't wear black skates. Only white."

Another day, she tried to get him to take home an assortment of piano scores, and seemed astonished to hear the Quales had no piano.

"Why not, Leo? Don't you like music?"

"My dad likes that Gershwing," he said, after a pause.

It is the only time I can ever remember my aunt's seeming foolish to me. She was pink in the face, ready to lead him by the hand through Gershwin to Bach. I bring to mind her flushed forehead and the excitement in the room, tension I was still too young to be able to measure, generated by the presence of the town dunce, unteachable and dying to go to war. Mr. Coleman had been right about her reading; Leo entered her imagination on the same wave as the Depression. For a while she decided the poor were to be joined, or imitated, rather than tided over. Leo was not offended; he did not know he was poor. The Quales were better off than most of their neighbors.

My aunt began to say that a taste of family life, of the warm, untidy kind that Leo surely enjoyed, might be good for me. She often sent me to the Quales' house with a grocery list for Leo, when she could as easily have called the store. A sheltered boy had much to learn from a brave, older boy already making his own way, she said; but all I learned, tagging after someone too big and too different, was that I had it in me to resent my aunt. I couldn't hate her. She wasn't a mean woman, not even strict by nature. She was trying to make up for the absence of a man's firm guidance.

Their family life seemed to me fierce and mournful. Between Leo and his mother lay something cold, like cold poison. On one of her dark days I watched Mrs. Quale putting Leo's plaid shirt through the hand wringer, clamped on the edge of the sink.

"On top of that," she said, perhaps to herself, not to me, "he had to take his time getting born. Arse first, as if he had all the leisure in the world. In no hurry. Didn't care about *me*. They said, 'Come on, Mrs. Q., make an effort, you don't want him to strangle.' He was blue in the face, when they finally saw he had a face. Didn't get oxygen. That's why. No oxygen. Nurse said, 'So don't be surprised if he stays pretty dim from the neck up.' "

Pursuing his cultural awakening, my aunt led Leo past the dining room, where he stopped to stare at an engraved portrait of Sir Walter Scott, but before he could ask who it was, and his age, she ushered him through to the parlor, showed him books, and said, "You may borrow anything."

His hand went straight to "The Case of Sergeant Grischa," which he may have taken to be a detective story. He kept it, I think, about three months, returned it, then asked to have it again.

Much later, Lily told me about the first time he brought the book to supper and propped it in front of his plate. He had been reading it some five weeks.

"What're you wasting time on now?" said his mother.

"Let the boy read," said Mr. Quale. "It's education."

Mrs. Quale had nothing against that. She believed in education but was not sure how it was obtained.

"Well, what is it?" said Mr. Quale. "Answer your mother when she speaks to you."

"Book I borrowed from Mrs. Cope."

"Take it back," his father said. "They'll be saying you stole it."

"Tell me, Leo," said Lily. "Tell me what it's about." She was so crazy about reading that she read the stuff on calendars. "I'll read to you, Leo. I've finished eating. Do you want me to read to you?"

Lily was the favorite: they didn't mind letting her read. When she could not pronounce a word, she skipped the whole line. The radio news, tuned to the pitch of Mrs. Quale's voice when she raised it, ran alongside Lily's tone, which was soft and unsteady. Mrs. Quale soon grew sick and tired of hearing Lily, and she could not figure out what sort of army the sergeant belonged to. Mr. Quale became impatient, too. He shouted that in his day deserters were stood up and shot, and that was the end of it. They didn't drag their existence on for dozens of pages. Mrs. Quale said it would do Leo a lot more good if he read to Lily. They did try it that way, several evenings, but he didn't enjoy it, and for the others he was too slow. He finally finished the book, on his own, and was the only one in the family who knew the deserter was stood up and shot.

Leo had his tonsils and adenoids out and walked home an hour later, bleeding into a towel. His small mother was with him, holding on to his sleeve. The cuts became infected, and he nearly died. When he was said to be out of danger, my aunt made me go and see him. She sent two jars of grape jelly, wrapped in leftover Christmas paper, and a note of encouragement, signed, "(Mrs.) Elizabeth B. Cope."

My first surprise was that they were humbly glad to see me—the shrimpy

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NOTES FROM THE AIR

A yak is a prehistoric cabbage: of that, at least, we may be sure.
But tell us, sages of the solarium, why is that light
still hidden back there, among houseplants and rubber sponges?
For surely the blessed moment arrived at midday

And now in midafternoon lamps are lit,
for it is late in the season. And as it struggles now
and is ground down into day, complaints
are voiced at the edges of darkness: Look, it says,

it has to be this way and no other. Time that one seizes
and takes along with one is running through the holes
like sand from a bag. And these sandy moments
accuse us, are just what our enemy ordered,

the surly one on his throne of impacted
gold. No matter if our tale be interesting
or not, whether children stop to listen and through the rent
veil of the air the immortal whistle is heard,

and screeches, songs not meant to be listened to.
It was some stranger's casual words, overheard in the windblown
street, above the roar of the traffic and then swept
to the distant orbit where words hover: *Alone*, it says,

• •

but you slept. And now everything is being redeemed,
even the square of barren grass that adjoins your doorstep,
too near for you to see. But others, children and others, will
when the right time comes. Meanwhile we mingle, and not

because we have to, because some host or hostess
has suggested it, beyond the limits of polite
conversation. And we, they too, were conscious of having
known it, written on the flyleaf of a book presented as a gift

at Christmas 1882. No more trivia, please, but music
in all the spheres leading up to where the master
wants to talk to you, place his mouth over yours,
withdraw that human fishhook from the crystalline flesh

where it was melting, give you back your clothes, penknife,
twine. And where shall we go when we leave? What tree is bigger
than night that surrounds us, is full of more things,
fewer paths for the eye and fingers of frost for the mind,

fruits halved for our despairing instruction, winds
to suck us up? If only the boiler hadn't exploded one
could summon them, icicles out of the rain, chairs enough
for everyone to be seated in time for the lesson to begin.

—JOHN ASHBERY

• •

parents, and Lily, wearing just her petticoat, her hair all suds. (Rumor had it that Catholics never washed.)

“Get some clothes on you,” her father said. “There’s company.”

Leo was getting royal treatment, propped up in his parents’ double bed with an embroidered pillow stuffed behind his neck. A number of unsorted social facts were shed from my person as I accepted his invitation to sit down at the foot of the bed.

He said, “Well, sport,” in a husky whisper, and moved his legs to allow me more room. I hardly dared look at him—I was not sure how to deal with my advancement to family friend—and stared instead at the pattern of daisies and asters on the pillow case. On a table next to the bed was a white enamel basin with a towel over it. He said they were giving him emetics, so he would throw up the rest of the infection.

“Well, sport,” he said again, meaning, I think, that extra conversation was up to me. The room was dark, ferociously heated by a kerosene stove. A stylized design of birch leaves, or sunflower petals, had been carved in the stove lid, to serve as vents. The heat and brilliance of the flame had turned the stove into a magic lantern: the whole ceiling was covered with ornamentation, hugely magnified, in quivering red and blue. Lily came in and sat down, combing her wet hair. She had buttoned on a gray cardigan belonging to her father, which fitted her like a coat. She said, “You’re fine, Leo,” because she still thought he might be dying.

Leo changed the position of his feet. I took it for a hint and got straight off the bed. He said, “Come again, sport,” and that rounded off the visit.

In March he put his clothes on, and found that everything he owned was short in the legs and sleeves. He had to duck under the frame doorway between the kitchen and storm porch. He did not return to work at once but did odd jobs around the house, getting his strength back. My aunt had a new delivery boy, Doug Bagshaw. He kept his tips, coppers and nickels, in a baking-powder tin. He liked to weigh the tin in his hand and make the coins jingle. My aunt did not try to draw him out, and never once said he or the Bagshaws might be good for me. When she referred to the old days, before Leo was taken so ill, it was to mention Herbie Dunn and his kind gift of the Jack Buchanan record. She recalled other Buchanan songs—“Two Little Bluebirds” and “A Cup of Coffee, a Sandwich, and You”—which she hummed for me. Buchanan was so tall, and his top hat made him so much taller, that he had trouble finding suitable dance partners. Saying this, she drew herself up, even straighter than before.

“I’M the general, you can be Grischa, the rest of you are soldiers.” That was Lily, marshalling her troops of little girls on the soggy spring lawn. There had been a freeze, then a thaw, then a new fall of spring snow. The game was a mixture of hide-and-seek and tag, with two teams drawn up, as in red rover or run sheep run. Anyone on the wrong side, the army that wasn’t Lily’s, could be shot on sight. “Grischa” was leader of a team, the equivalent of being a general. The victims lay down and got their coats wet.

Leo had been sweeping the front walk. Now he stood leaning on his broom, eating jujubes out of a paper bag. There was only one other boy, Vince Whitton, aged six. His sister, Beryl, wasn’t allowed to play in the street unless she agreed to take him with her.

Vince said, “One other time, I was over here and some person gave us some jujubes,” but Leo never made a move.

My aunt had sent me across the river after school to find out if Leo was ever going to work for the grocer again; it would be her last show of interest in the Quales. I stood, neither claimed nor discarded, doing nothing in particular, watching Lily in her red coat.

Just then Mr. Quale came along the street and up the walk Leo had cleared of snow. He wore a wool cap and a long gray scarf. He said to Leo, “How do you stand all that jabbering?,” meaning the little girls, excited and shrill.

Nothing is so numbing as an unexpected audience. The soldiers started to pick lumps of snow from each other’s coats. Mr. Quale nodded his head, as if it were on a wire spring, and took his cold pipe out of his pocket. He pointed the stem at the girls, then at us, and said, “And bear this in mind, lads. You can’t ever do a bloody thing with them.”

Now Mrs. Quale appeared on the

doorstep. She held up a white stocking so we could see the hole in it, and called, "I'll thrash you, Lily Quale—I swear to God!"

Vince Whitton started to wail: "Beryl, I want to go home."

"Go home, then."

"Not without you."

"Glory, wouldn't I be glad to see the last of you," his sister said.

WHEN the war came Leo waited to be the right age; then he enlisted and left Châtelroux. His mother baked coconut biscuits and marble cake, which she posted to him in a tin box. He brought the box back empty when he came on leave. They talked about different things to eat. She had an old, stained, illustrated cookbook they looked at together, and Leo would pick out what he wanted for supper. No more of everybody eating something different: the others had to settle for Leo's choice.

Lily and I commuted to high schools in Montreal. We took the same train in the morning but did not sit together. Girls sat with girls, boys with boys. Sometimes in the afternoon we saw each other in Windsor Station. The Quales had moved to a two-story, semi-detached house made of orange brick. A steep, narrow staircase rose out of the living room. It was the first thing you saw when you came in. Mrs. Quale waxed the steps and kept them very clean, and never missed a chance to say "upstairs." There was a bathroom and an indoor toilet. They were buying the house inch by inch.

Leo's room contained a large bed with a candlewick spread and a varnished desk, in case he had something to write. The desk and the counterpane were the first things Mrs. Quale ever had delivered from Eaton's. No sooner were they moved upstairs than he went away, leaving behind his civilian life and his life altogether. On that wartime Saturday when I sat doing homework with Lily, Leo had got to Halifax with his regiment and was waiting to embark. His bed was always made up, Lily told me. Mrs. Quale, who now loved Leo best, had heard about embarkation leaves that occurred twice, sons and husbands who came back after having said goodbye. She thought she might see Leo, late at night, under the light in the porch, carrying his kit. Some women dreaded any hitch in the slow process of separation. It was impossible to speak the same brave words twice. Some said they would as soon face a ghost as a man seen off back a few days later but somehow different in look and manner, already remote.

When Mrs. Quale would let us, we used Leo's desk. In the kitchen our books got stained, because Mrs. Quale kept wiping the table oilcloth with a soapy rag, part of an old undershirt of Leo's. Upstairs we were obliged to sit at opposite ends of the desk, so our knees wouldn't touch. Mrs. Quale would look in, bringing us something to eat or drink, or just making sure we hadn't stirred from our chairs. Once, I remember, she said, "Who's winning?" as though "education" were another of Lily's games, one for which Leo had never found the knack.

Lily tried again: "How about letting us work in Leo's room?"

"You heard me. Not unless I'm in the house."

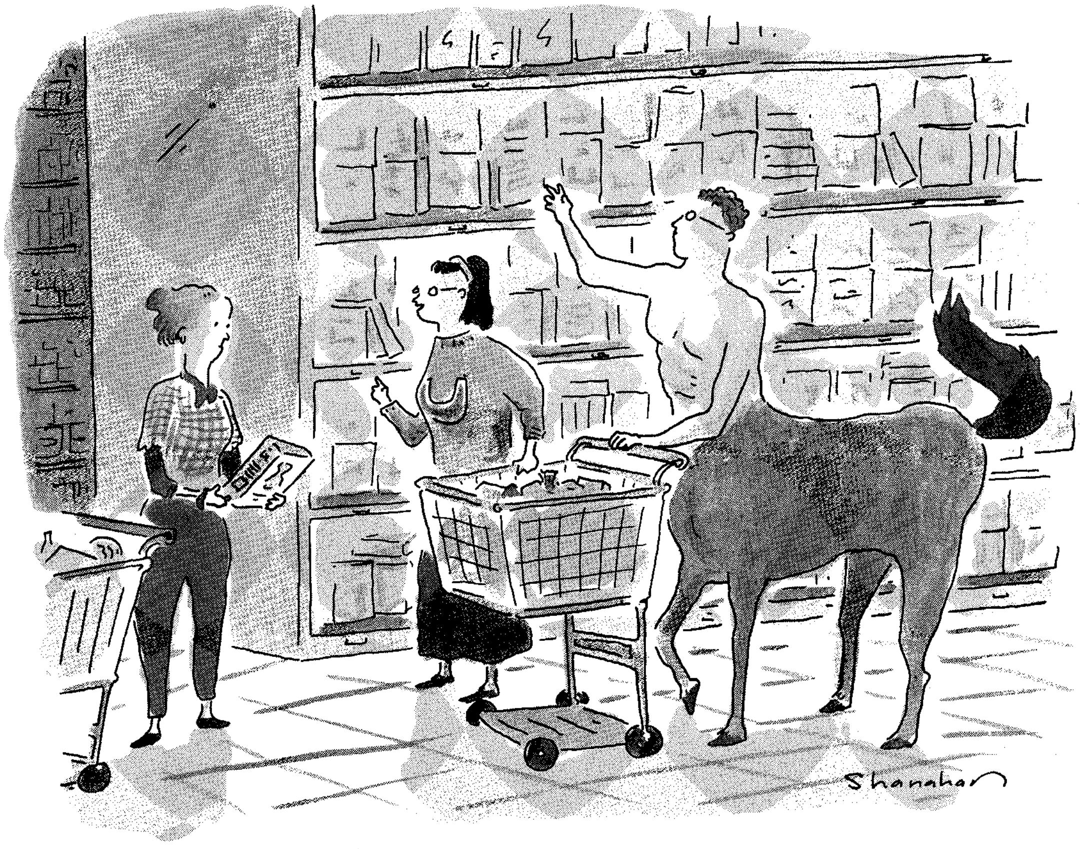
"You are in the house."

Mrs. Quale replied that we were to keep away from the stairs altogether. She was here, yes, but not for long. She sounded as if she had finally decided to quit her home and family, but she was just taking an embroidered tray runner over to Mrs. Bagshaw's, because of next day's Sodality sale. The sale was for the benefit of Catholic missions: my father's rivals.

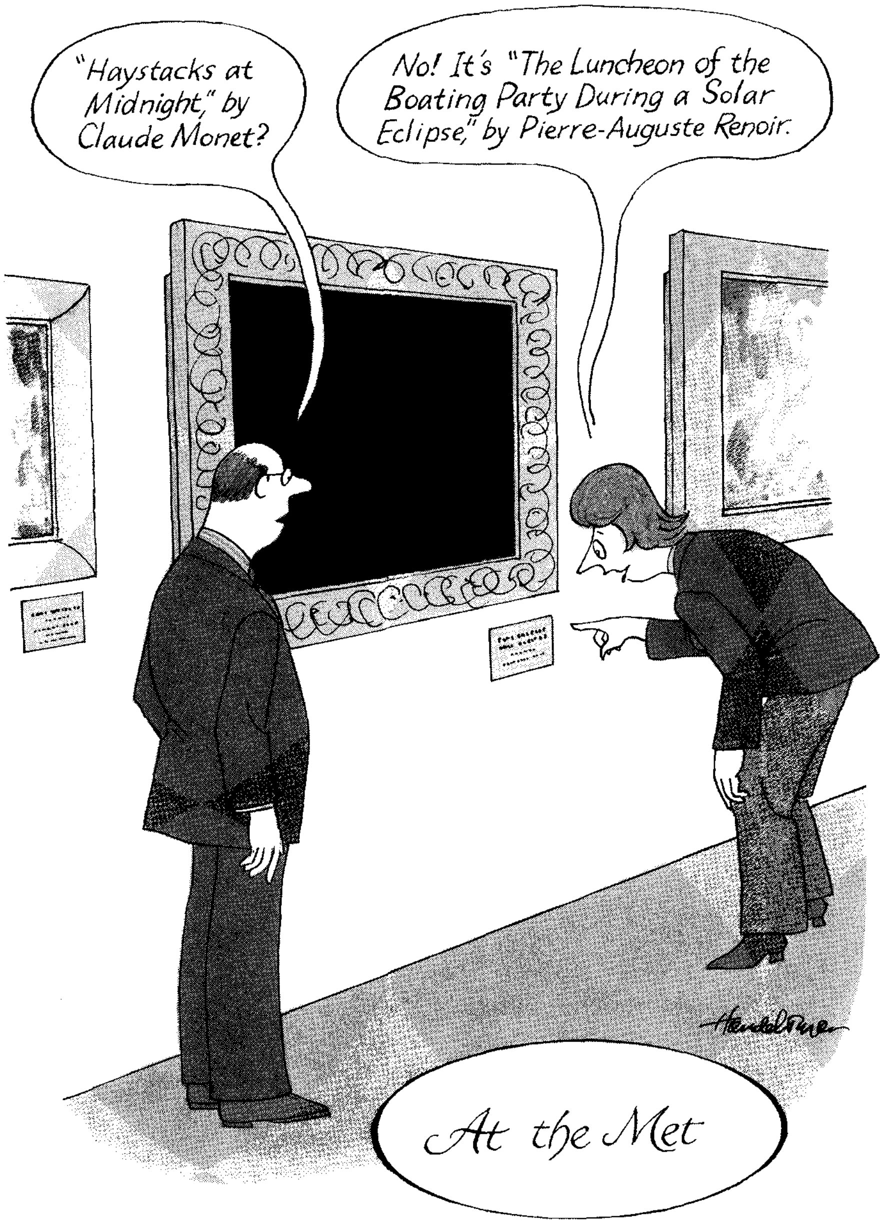
"Steve," she said, "either you go home right away or you promise you'll stay where you are, by the window, where the neighbors can see you."

In their new kitchen hung a mirror with a frame of grained pitch pine—just for decoration. No one had to wash or shave in the kitchen sink. Mrs. Quale pinned a blue feather to her hat, then stared at it.

"Keep the feather on, Mum," said Lily.



"Derek and I have always been very aware of the nutritional value of whole grains."


"Haystacks at Midnight," by Claude Monet?
No! It's "The Luncheon of the Boating Party During a Solar Eclipse," by Pierre-Auguste Renoir.
At the Met

"It looks lovely." But Mrs. Quale could not decide.

Five minutes after her mother had gone out the front door, Lily said, "It would be better upstairs. We can't even spread our things out here—there's so much stuff on the table, ketchup and mustard and that. And I hate the noise of that kitchen clock. It's like a hammer."

"She said to stay near the window."

"Dad stops work at noon Saturdays, but he never gets in before five. Mum will be having tea with the other ladies."

"She might want to come back, just to see where you are," I said. "She may change her mind about wearing the feather."

"No, not now. She'd have done it right away." The clock was a china plate with a pattern of windmills. The arms of the tallest windmill told the time. She looked up; we both did. "Don't bother to bring all your books," she said. "Just what you'll be needing."

Upstairs we started one thing, then another. There wasn't much to it; we never got beyond high fever. I wanted to pull down the blind, but Lily said it would draw the neighbors' attention. She folded the bedspread—her mother's pride. She must have made a mistake about the family timetable, for we suddenly heard Mr. Quale at the front door. We were on our feet and presentable by the time he reached the kitchen and dropped something—a newspaper, probably—on the table. He got a bottle out of the icebox and poured himself a beer, capped the bottle, put it back. There was a moment of silence: he may have picked up the blue feather lying on the drainboard, wondering what it was doing there. Or he may have noticed the books we'd left behind, or heard us moving around, talking in whispers. He plodded to the foot of the stairs and called, "Who's home?"

Lily pulled the coverlet over the sheets and smoothed it. We started down the staircase and met him, almost at the top.

"Want me to get your tea, Dad?" she said.

"I'm all right." He did not acknowledge me.

Lily collected the rest of my books from the kitchen. I held them flat on my chest, like a shield. She came with me along the river road, up the wooden steps to the bridge, and about halfway across. The Montreal train rushed by and the whole bridge shook; we had to stop and hold on to the railing. As the noise faded, in a thinning mist of steam and soot, she said, "Leo's gone for good. I've said goodbye to him. I know it. Dad's already starting to say I'm all they've got, and Leo isn't even overseas. I'm not all they've got. They've got their new house."

When Lily arrived home her mother was waiting in the doorway. She smacked Lily's face twice, and Mr. Quale came running out of the kitchen, shouting something. He stopped to unbuckle his belt. Lily thought, God in Heaven, is he going to take all his clothes off, and she backed off and went down the front step and stood in the street. Her father came no farther than the veranda, because of the neighbors. He had his belt in his hand and looked as if he had just got up. They stared at each other, with the length of the front walk between them. Then he threaded the belt back on and said, "Have I ever laid a hand on you? But just you keep out of my way, now. Stay out of my way. That's what I want to tell you." His voice was so steady and quiet that Lily began to cry.

He had looked in Leo's room and seen nothing—and he was a policeman who later became a detective, specializing in divorces and evidence of adultery. When his wife came home the first thing she did was turn back the bedspread, and she found makeup from Lily's bare legs all over the sheet.

The Quales came to my aunt's house that night, carrying a leather grip. My aunt, sensing something, told me to go to my room. I was too big to be ordered that way, exactly, but I went upstairs and lay on the floor and listened through the iron grille of the hot-air register. I could hear Mrs. Quale telling my aunt how I had played them false and destroyed their daughter.

My aunt made an astonishing reply: "You have let that girl run wild. It's a wonder nothing worse has ever happened. She roams all over town on Leo's bike, talking to strangers. She has been seen near the highway, talking to men in cars. She has been seen with a gang, Lily the only girl, throwing stones at people in canoes."

The stone-throwing incident had occurred when Lily was eleven. My aunt was not trying to excuse me but simply was upholding the tradition that made girls responsible for their own virtue. I was guilty of having disobeyed Lily's mother—nothing more.

"Put that thing away," my aunt said, sharply, next.

The Quales had opened the leather bag and were attempting to unfold the evidence. "It's the sheet," said Mr. Quale—his only remark.

"I believe you. Please put it away."

"Don't you look down on us," said Mrs. Quale. "We've got our only son in the service. Lily's always been head of her class. We own most of the home we live in. My husband has an honored position on the police force. Mr. Quale has never walked a beat."

Did my aunt smile? Something made Mrs. Quale break into full-throated weeping—nothing like my aunt's rare, silent tears. It was a comic-strip bawling, Katzenjammer roars of "Wah!" and "Ooh." My aunt said, "I know, I know," and offered to make tea. Soon after that I heard the Quales leave.

My aunt did not let me think I was innocent. The only reason she did not send me away to school, as she wanted to, was that my father could not afford the fees. She was saving her own money to put me through university. In the meantime, it would be good if I were to show common sense and gratitude. I had never heard her say I was supposed to be grateful for anything: for a time, it put a wall of shyness between us. The Quales, stretching their means to the limit, shut Lily up with nuns, in one of the places from which her Polish friend had been expelled. I went on commuting, but without a sight of Lily.

WINDSOR STATION was full of soldiers, and there was a brownish, bleak kind of light on winter afternoons. Once I saw Lily's Polish friend. She was a tender blonde, dimpled, with small blue eyes—something like Leo's. I noticed her wedding ring, and said, "Is your husband going overseas?"

"Oh, no," she said. "Morrie's got a heart. I mean, he's cardiac. I'm not here for anything in particular. I just came over with my girlfriend." I had shot past her in height. She had to look up, as Leo's mother did to Leo. Her girlfriend, talking to a knot of airmen in the shadows of the station, was unknown to me. Lily's friend seemed to be weighing the advantages of spending any more time in my company, but she must have spent more than I remember: it was she who told me what happened after Lily got home that other afternoon. She was a good-natured girl but restless, as if nothing had yet been settled, in spite of the wedding ring. She wrote me off, abruptly, and turned away. I took that for a good sign. I would not have known how to end the conversation. Something in my manner spoke for me, and would always ease me out of awkward times. So I thought.

"Aren't you Steven Burnet?" Mitchell Coleman looked wholly different as a soldier: younger, for one thing. The lumpy uniform, the thick boots, the close-cut hair, brought him near to Leo in age and manner. Even in the unprepossessing uniform he seemed neat and spruce, still ready to be knocked unconscious and undressed by strangers—all that was left of his former self.

He gave me a slow look and probably surmised, correctly, that I had known him at once but would never have approached him. "I barely recognized you," he said. "You're twice your old height. But there's still a look—a family look, I suppose. More of an expression than an arrangement of features." I did not know what to make of a personal observation of that kind. I wondered if he meant to criticize my aunt's appearance, or mine. "How old can you be now?"

"I'm still going to high school."

"They tried to teach me how to make Army training films," he said. "But documentary movies are a string of lies. I decided not to sit the war out." He did not ask for news of his old friend; the trusted friend who had dropped him, without a word of explanation, without hearing his side of the case. "Well," he said. "For King and country, eh?" and there was not a hint or a glance to let me know whether he was being ironic. He shouldered his kit, and we shook hands.

He's only a corporal, like Leo, I said to myself. At his age he should at least be a captain.

WHEN she was playing at war, Lily made medals out of silver paper. Her soldiers, pronounced dead, got up to receive a decoration. They said, "I've got mud on my coat. I'm going to catch it at home. Somebody, help me get the mud off."

In that war, or one like it, Vince Whitton begins to whine: "Beryl, my feet are getting cold. I'm hungry. I have to go to the bathroom."

"You can pee your pants, for all I care."

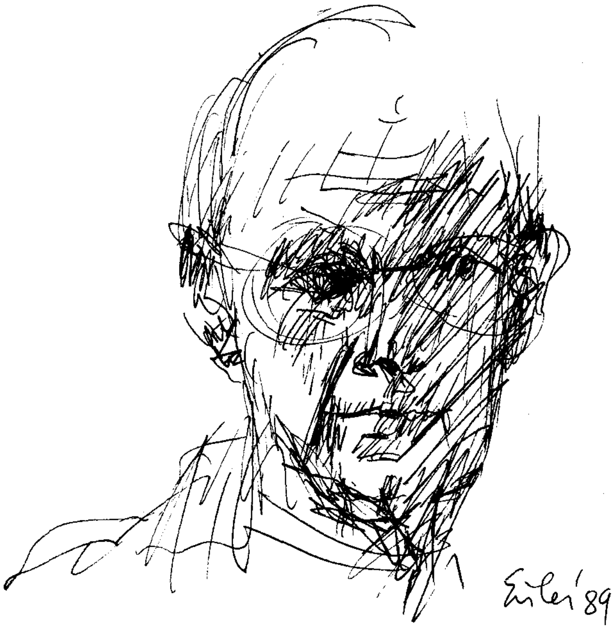
He stops snivelling for a minute, and moves closer to Leo; leaves the girls to be with the men. Mr. Quale points the stem of his pipe, that time or another, and says, "You can't do a bloody thing with them." The players freeze. They stand, hardly breathing, small creatures in an open field, hoping they have become the white of the snow around them and the hawk will leave them alone.

Leo's death made two of the English newspapers in Montreal. My aunt sent Mrs. Quale a note. Looking back, she felt that the Quales had never been suited to the occasion; in short, they had done me no good whatever. I had learned nothing from Leo or his family—"poor Leo," he had become. In a sense, they had ceased even to be a family, with Leo gone and Lily away from home, under close surveillance. Once, she said, "The worst mistake I ever made was when I let you chase around after Leo"—which shows how blameless her life must have been.

—MAVIS GALLANT

PROFILES

STEALING A MARCH ON THE WORLD—II



Henri Cartier-Bresson lives with his wife, Martine Franck, and their teen-age daughter in a modest apartment in the Second Arrondissement. Since 1937, though, he has kept a small flat near the Place Vendôme, and he still often goes there to draw. It has a tiny bedroom, a rudimentary kitchen, and a longish, many-windowed work space, whose shelves are stocked with books on drawing and painting. Quiet and bright, the little flat makes a charming atelier, and it also serves as a sort of hostel for Cartier-Bresson's out-of-town friends: there is a café downstairs and a caterer's establishment across the street, so the visitor has all that he needs and more. But when I stayed there recently I kept trying to picture the place in earlier, rougher days, when there was no shower and no modern toilet, and Cartier-Bresson had bathed by pouring casseroles of water over his head. I knew that the little pantry had been a darkroom then, and had often been littered with prints by the likes of Robert Capa and David Seymour; with this fancied scene in mind, I began to rummage through piles of Cartier-Bresson's old papers—scrapbooks of clippings and photographs and proofs, and faded copies of illustrated magazines—trying to round out my mental picture of photojournalism in its shining moment, before television newscasting stole much of its function and almost all its thunder.

Most of the Cartier-Bresson photographs I came across were from the forties and early fifties. A lot were fairly routine, but sometimes a strong forgotten picture caught my eye. One was of a Nazi functionary, tall, gaunt, and vulturine, being held at gunpoint by two stubby, delighted-looking French partisans; there were also good shots of General Leclerc's troops distributing food to Alsatians, a touching story on the roundup of some "gray mice" (women who had consorted with German troops) by soldiers of the French Resistance, and interesting snapshots of Paul Valéry and Paul Éluard. There were some delicate Italian views.

These photographs represented a great variety of subjects, but one event they all documented was how Cartier-Bresson had gradually backed into the profession of photojournalism. Originally, he had studied painting; though he liked taking photographs and knew he was superb at it, he hadn't wanted to be a full-time photographer of any sort, and even up to the late forties he had harbored serious doubts about becoming one. He also felt—with some reason—that the editorial needs of the bourgeois picture press would collide with his Surrealist aesthetic. It took Robert Capa to convince him that professional photojournalism might actually suit his temperament.

As early as 1936, during the first phase of the Spanish Civil War, Capa had talked to friends about creating a "brotherhood" of camera reporters which would enable them to retain their copyrights and the legal ownership of their negatives. For years, he intermittently championed this project, and finally, in the spring of 1947, he succeeded in bringing it about. The new association was to be called Magnum Photos and to have seven shareholders, five of whom—himself, George Rodger, William Vandivert, David Seymour, and Cartier-Bresson—would be photographers. The other two would be administrators: Vandivert's wife, Rita, would run the outfit's main office, in New York, and Maria Eisner, a veteran photo-agency director, would head the Paris branch. To induce the recalcitrant Cartier-Bresson to help found the agency, Capa used two shrewd arguments. He appealed to Cartier-Bresson's anticolonialist sentiments and love of adventure by proposing India and the Orient as his future turf, and he also pointed out that nothing in the craft of picture reportage could corrupt Cartier-Bresson's Surrealist soul if he refused to let it do so. "Watch out for labels," Capa told him. "They're reassuring, but somebody's going to stick one on you that you'll never get rid of: 'the little Surrealist photographer.' You'll be lost, you'll get precious and mannered. Take instead the label of 'photojournalist,' and keep the other thing for yourself, in your heart of hearts." What Capa perhaps failed to see was that Surrealism and photoreportage, far from being inherently opposed, actually had an affinity for each other.

By the summer of 1947, when Cartier-Bresson sailed for Bombay, he was operating under a specific set of assumptions. Among them were that Magnum would be his exclusive broker, that he would control the rights to his work, that every effort would be made to insure that his pictures were not cropped in magazine layouts, and that he would supply at the least the rough draft, if not the actual words, of the captions for his photographs. One long-term consequence of this arrangement was that all his contact sheets and their accompanying commentaries have remained on file in the agency's Paris archive. As I thumbed through the scrapbooks in his atelier-apartment, I began to feel that even if there were few or no great pictures buried in the Magnum archive—this was what I had heard from the man himself—it might still prove illuminating to look through some important groups of contact sheets and their corresponding captions.

Today, Magnum Photos is situated on the Rue des Grands-Augustins, not far from the house where Frenhofer meets Poussin, in Balzac's novella "The Unknown Masterpiece." I never had time to discover whether an unknown masterpiece of Cartier-Bresson's was hidden there (his files were too vast for me to comb through all of them), but I soon realized that the pictures and captions from 1947 to 1949—roughly, from the partition of India to the Communist victory in China—constituted an extraordinary document, a gripping picture-diary of the Orient at a turning point in its history. Each set of captions was invariably preceded by a long typewritten commentary, or correspondent's "letter," composed in a vivid, rather ungrammatical English that often lapsed, by design or ignorance, into French.

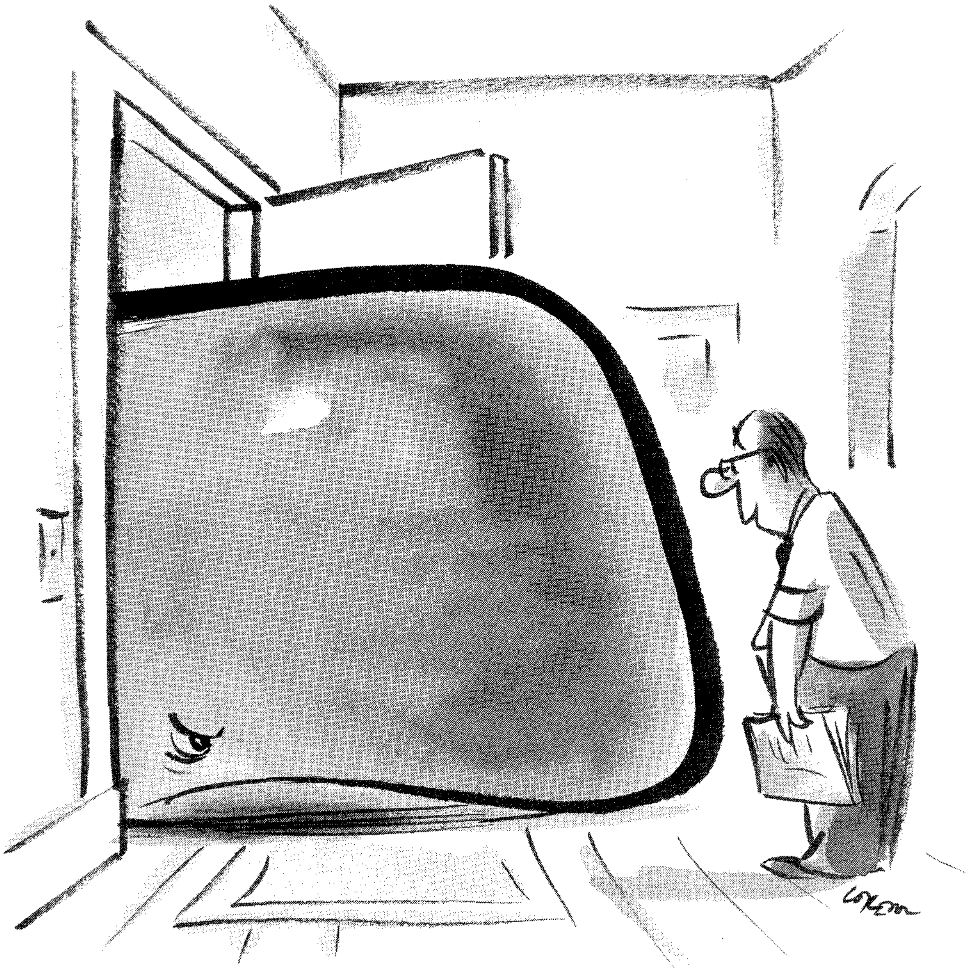
At the time of his departure for India, Cartier-Bresson was not yet regularly supplying *Life* or any other magazine with pictures. *Life* had Margaret Bourke-White in India, and only a little later, when it grew clear that more than one photographer would be required, did the magazine solicit his help. So he departed as a free-lancer, pure and simple. He assumed that he would be years in the East, and he took his wife along with him. Cartier-Bresson was then married to a pretty, round-faced Javanese woman, who went by the stage name of Ratna Mohini, though all her friends called her Eli. Trained by Uday Shankar in classical Indian dance, she was well connected in Delhi, so Cartier-Bresson hoped that he would rapidly gain a feel for the ins and outs of Indian society.

Indian independence was declared in mid-August of 1947, but Cartier-Bresson and his wife did not arrive in the new state until a month later. Their ship, a German vessel that the British had captured during the war, was beset with problems that outwitted its crew, and it lingered for some weeks at Port Sudan before steaming on toward Bombay. The ship also put in at Aden for a few days, and as I looked over Cartier-Bresson's shots of that city I couldn't help remembering that Paul Nizan had passed this way, too, in 1926. Nizan is more or less unknown in the United States, but he has long been almost a cult figure for the French left. A novelist and publicist, he became in the late thirties a correspondent for the Communist newspaper *Ce Soir*, for which Cartier-Bresson, though not himself a Communist, also worked. (When they covered the coronation of King George VI together, Cartier-Bresson characteristically shot the crowd instead of the pageant.) Nizan was temperamentally unlike Cartier-Bresson, but some of his feelings about what it meant to travel to the East might also have been expressed by the photographer, who had distinct Buddhist leanings—or, for that matter, by any number of French Communist or Surrealist intellectuals who matured in the interwar period.

"Once it was established that the collapse and decay of Europe was a simple, inescapable fact, the renaissance and flowering of the Orient became a fact equally obvious," Nizan wrote in "Aden, Arabie," his dyspeptic tract of 1931. "For Europeans, the Orient held salvation and a new life. It had medicine for our ills, and love to spare. We made free use of false analogies with antiquity and drew on the official history of religions. We endowed Asia with all the human virtues that had been gradually disappearing from the West over the last three hundred years. . . . The spirit of civilization hovered over India, China seemed more marvellous to us than it had to Marco Polo." Nizan rang the obvious changes on the already timeworn idea that a colony (like a prison or a brothel) gave a true, unvarnished image of Western capitalism, but he hadn't much use for the "lazy, dirty, unknowable" natives. Cartier-Bresson leaned the opposite way—he found the natives knowable, and worth knowing—but his trajectory along a path already described by Nizan affords yet another example of his tendency to reprise, as a photographer, a number of celebrated literary voyages to the nonwhite world. In Africa, there had been Rimbaud; in Aden, there was Nizan; and later, in the Far East, he would arrive in the wake of André Malraux.

THE LINTNERS:
STUCK ON THE SOFA SINCE 1982

By the war's end, Cartier-Bresson had been largely disabused of his earlier idealism, but it is nonetheless significant that most of his Asian theatres of vision already belonged to French literature's roster of *paysages moralisés*.



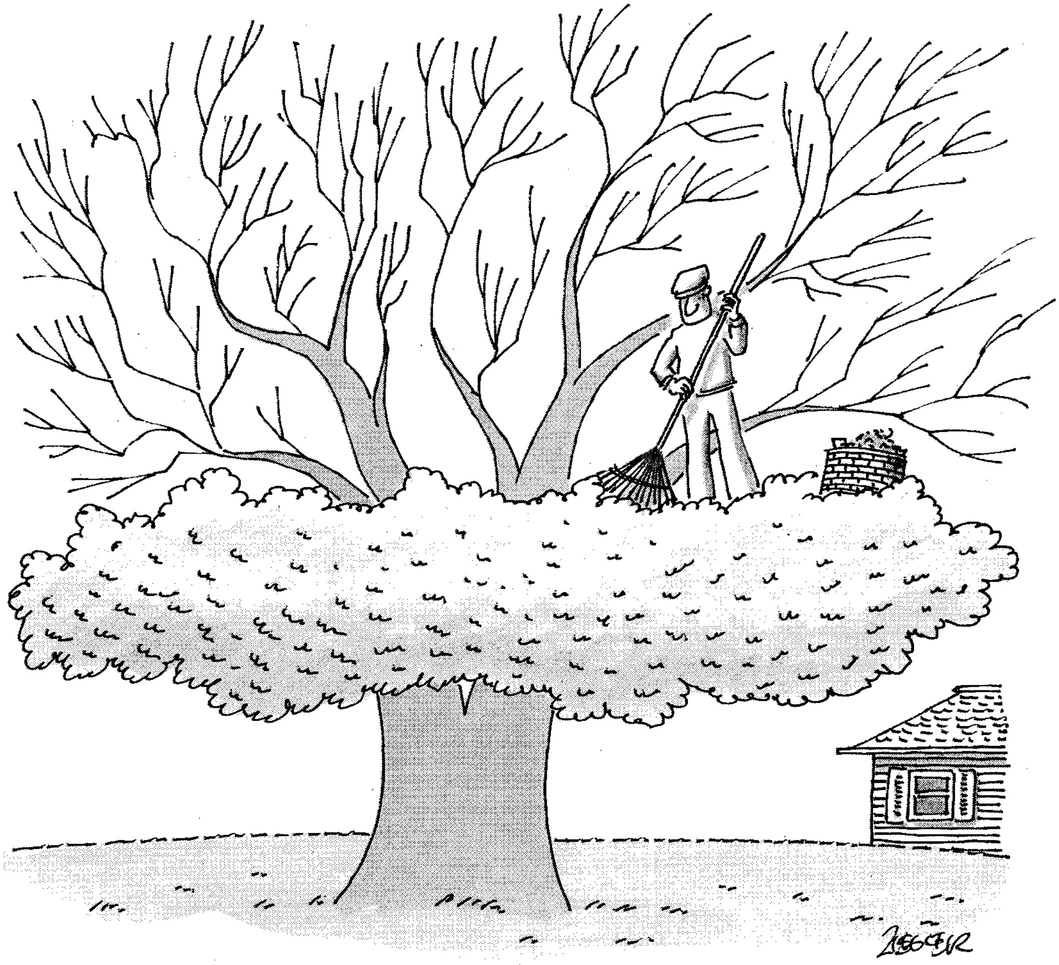
“I think it’s a very worthy cause, but I’ve already responded to a phone solicitation.”

Teeming with men and gods, India summoned up all of Cartier-Bresson's luxuriant powers of observation. Equally interested in folklore, religion, and politics, in the portraiture of types and individuals, he took pictures that encompassed the widest moral context; he also saw that he could capture public events, record little-known ways of life, take note of arresting performances, and still discover, in all these situations, an element of the surreal. In Cartier-Bresson's contacts, there are snapshots of textile workers, forts and mosques, migrating peasants, refugee camps, flashy durbars, religious feasts, historic leaders, markets and ashrams, classical dancers, warriors, and saints; there are whole unpublished reportages on the Pathans and the Harijans. One frame may seem chiefly ethnographic in nature, the next a pure registration of form. Yet, though the kind of scrutiny varies, the point of view—that of the passionate diarist—remains unchanged.

When he arrived in Bombay in September of 1947, Cartier-Bresson discovered a land recently partitioned into two states. India, despite its Hindu majority, proclaimed itself secular; Pakistan wavered, contemplating the adoption of an Islamic constitution. Communal violence had claimed over half a million lives, and riots still raged fitfully in the streets, prompting Gandhi to begin a total fast in protest against the persecution of Muslims. As it happened, Cartier-Bresson's wife was a close friend of one of Jawaharlal Nehru's sisters, Krishna Hutheesingh, and through the latter he eventually obtained an introduction to the Mahatma himself.

Cartier-Bresson's coverage of the last days of Gandhi seems at once fortuitous and predestined. The day before his interview was to take place, he went to have a look at the scene outside Birla House, in Delhi, where Gandhi had taken up residence. It was January 29, 1948; word was out that Gandhi had just received assurances from the principal Hindu leaders that Muslims would be treated fairly. The contact sheets at Magnum show that Cartier-Bresson first glimpsed Gandhi through an open door, propped against two pillows on a mean camp bed, his head swathed in white; a worship service had evidently just ended, and a crowd of well-wishers had surged into the Birla House compound. In subsequent frames we see the Maharani of Baroda, the ex-Minister of Gwalior State, and Princess Kolapur paying their respects, and Gandhi receiving a delegation of survivors of a massacre that had occurred on a train from Gujarat.

The next day, Cartier-Bresson rode his bicycle to Birla House, a scene of increasing political tension, for his scheduled four-o'clock interview. He photographed Gandhi and showed him his MOMA catalogue, which the Indian leader carefully perused; then he rode off, and fifteen minutes later he heard the cries that Gandhi had been killed. He sped back to Birla House. The first frame of the relevant contact sheet is captioned “Place where Gandhi fell half an hour before.” From our retrospective perch, the absence of any material directly relating to the murder constitutes a huge lacuna in the journalistic story; but for Cartier-Bresson this story did not actually exist until it was created, instantaneously, by the assassin. “It must be understood,” he has said in this connection, “that when you are in the midst of extraordinary events you often can't see anything but minor and apparently unrelated incidents—it's a little like what Stendhal said about the Battle of Waterloo. My camera enables me to catch details that are very important at the moment when I want to compose a synthesis of all that I have seen.” Cartier-Bresson apparently felt that there were more interesting tasks than staying on top of a developing political crisis, and this suggests how far the sense of a potential “story” and the search for the pictorial are from being the same



thing. He was out to ambush scenes that would stand on their own merits rather than furnish illustrations to the text of history. If the two activities happened to overlap, so much the better; if not, the pictorial impulse was bound to win out.

One cannot forget that Cartier-Bresson is a prodigy of nature. His nervous and ocular organization so far exceeds that of the ordinary photo-reporter that he learned within a few months of acquiring his first Leica to take snapshots of incomparable eloquence. He has never had to struggle for greatness in this field, and his work has never improved or declined. Nobody has ever been able to figure out how he takes his incredible pictures, and many people make the mistake of thinking he knows. In fact, he doesn't; if he had a precise idea of what he was doing while he was doing it, he would probably be too slow to do it well. But people still want to know how he got this or that shot. Usually, he tries to be helpful, and offers some affable reply—but, really, you can hear that he has nothing to say. At first, he regrets having to sound so disobliging, but after a while he begins to resent the burden of regret. "What can I say?" he sputters. "I like that shot, too. But I don't know how I got it, I don't even know what I was thinking at the time—probably nothing. I guess I'm just an impostor. O.K., the scene is remarkable, but I didn't create it, you know—I just happened to be there." And finally he loses his temper. "I tell you, *I just happened to be there! I'm not responsible!*"

Cartier-Bresson's photo essay on the death of Gandhi, which first appeared in *Life* and formed a part of his 1988 India show at the International Center of Photography, in New York, is really a portrait of popular distress; through it runs a marked preference for exemplary tableaux at the expense of current-events reportage. The key pictures are studies of crowd rhythms. Down the years, his work has shown an exceptional feel for the rapids and whirlpools of bodies in motion; no one has ever seen so clearly how a single mysterious force seems to ripple through many heads of hair at the same time, making one brilliant scrawl of tresses, or how certain knots of figures, striking queerly consonant attitudes, seem to rise like symbolic sculpture groups out of the human tide. Aside from this visual quality, the sequence on Gandhi's funeral has a moral dimension, in the broadest sense of the word. With his finely tuned sense of the right distance to be from the crowd, Cartier-Bresson caught masses of distinguishable persons: his sense of where to position himself, implicit in each picture, conveys his empathy for those he is recording. He does not wish to render suffering picturesque but to enable his audience to feel the anguish of an orphaned people.

And yet, for all their vividness, these reportorial shots do not really equal the other Indian images—the crowd of veiled Muslim women outside a shrine at Srinagar; the women praying at daybreak on a hillside in Kashmir; the *dhobis*, or clothes-driers, of Ahmadabad; the men dancing in the Kurukshetra refugee camp—which rise above the topical into the realm of the magical. Transcending the Indian context, these pictures confirm the persistence of Cartier-Bresson's Surrealist bent; they also remind us, in their eloquence of structure and pose, of the author's deep visual culture. Especially in the famous Kurukshetra picture (whose personnel perform a Punjabi dance called the *bhangra*), a certain friezelike, almost Poussinesque clarity of gesture and balance is unmistakable.

CARTIER-BRESSON was in Rangoon when, in December of 1948, *Life* requested him to cover the civil war in China. He and Ratna flew first to Shanghai, where he checked in at the bureau office; then he flew on alone to Peiping.

At that time, the Communist forces, known as the People's Liberation Army, had consolidated their grip on Manchuria and had advanced almost as far south as Shanghai, but their

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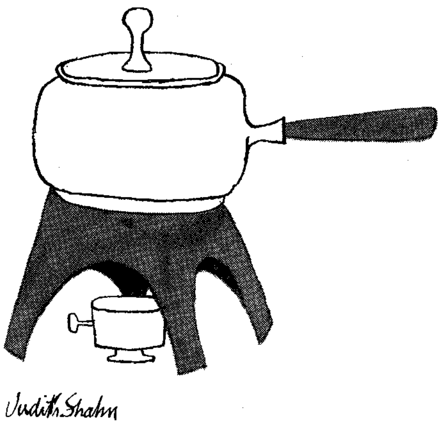
power was concentrated in the countryside, leaving a number of important towns, including Tsingtao and Tientsin, in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. Peiping itself was surrounded, its fall a foregone conclusion. Neither side had any wish to see the city destroyed, however, and the garrison commander, General Fu Tso-yi, was haggling with the People's Liberation Army over the terms of surrender when Cartier-Bresson arrived. A tough old soldier, Fu held out for good conditions for himself and his troops; after the surrender, he went over to the Communist side.

It was perhaps in China that Cartier-Bresson experienced the most profound disconnection from his European past. To cross the Chinese frontier was to enter a kingdom self-proclaimedly "central"; it was to discover one's own provinciality, if not downright barbarousness, in the eyes of a fifth of the world. A sort of transaction also took place, in which Cartier-Bresson's intense desire for invisibility—a trait he shares with other photojournalists—was forfeited in exchange for access to a splendidly pictorial situation. The trade-off entailed much in the way of discomfiture: his white skin began to feel like a morbid abnormality, and he often rued the Norman blueness of his eyes. He realized that it would be terribly hard for him this time to remain the unseen observer: there were so very many people in the streets, and they were, in the Chinese way, so unappeasably curious. The curiosity was a contagion: if one pair of eyes caught sight of his own, all eyes were instantly upon him. His mobility was reduced, as he informed the people at Magnum, "by fifty kids stuck to my legs." The citizenry was so alert that it made China "the most difficult country to photograph I have been to," he reported. "A photographer should, to work well, have the same space as a referee has around . . . boxers." Moreover, the Chinese considered all impromptu photography a breach of etiquette. Cartier-Bresson once told me that to take a picture in a Chinese home "showed about as much tact as patting the fanny of the daughter of the house" in an English one. He noticed, too, that in a land struggling to awaken from the nightmare of treaty ports and foreign gunboats he often figured as a malevolent intruder. He was the subject, as he still tells people, of hatred and envy but "never of respect."

The dismaying complication was that he himself felt a deep, deferential regard for the Chinese. In Peiping one morning, he chanced upon a group of men doing gymnastic exercises in the T'ai Miao Gardens, by the Imperial Palace, and when they broke up and walked off to work a few were still "sketching some movements unconsciously, as one going out of the opera hums an air." "Charming town," he added, "when one can act as an individual without being called an eccentric or a character. I did not take this pix of dancing away in the street as I have too much respect for them and it might have seemed that I was making fun of them."

Ten miles outside Peiping, a battle was shaping up, but the Kuomintang, which had recently lost about two hundred thousand troops to the enemy, seemed doomed to defeat. Everywhere in the streets and shops, an air of dispassionate expectancy reigned:

> We went to a teahouse, a large room here where around nine A.M. gentlemen come and have a cup of tea, bringing with them their bird and crickets. They hang the cage at the ceiling or put it next to their cup on the table. With the faint rays of the winter sun floats into the room the fumes of gone centuries. An old man rubs in his fist two nuts against each other, they got dark red and shiny, he is the fourth generation who is rubbing these same two nuts, while his neighbor holds a stick with a string, at the end of it flies a bird as kite or a toy—it is a *companion* not a captive; another one reads the paper—is it about the government troops progressing southwards or just the local ads? The old waiter passes ritually from table to table, pouring hot water on the tea; a man stood up and took out of his sleeve a little piece of wood with a horsehair at the end, introduced it through the holes in a little box where he keeps his cricket, and this makes the cricket sing; behind him some refugee students are sitting in leather battle jackets; an old man comes in with his cage with a cover around so the bird does not catch cold or get frightened in the street; all is very quiet, everyone thinks more than he talks, the birds sing and the crickets too when their master tickles them with the little hair. On the walls some posters: "Track down unstable elements" (Communists). . . . The room is full of lip noises of sipping the tea, birds, crickets, and kind smiles.



A splendid photograph of this teahouse, or one very much like it, appeared a few years later as a double-page spread in "The Decisive Moment," Cartier-Bresson's first full-scale book of photographs.

The Chinese, on the whole, were helpful, though they rarely confided in him. He fell in with a pedicab driver, known for some reason as Buddha 34, who ran him about town and did a little rudimentary interpreting for him. This fellow had a sardonic smile that reminded Cartier-Bresson of the poet Max Jacob, and he seemed to enjoy the role of dragoman. Once, Cartier-Bresson caught sight of an old lady with a fox fur around her neck walking in a crowd of Army recruits. He took a picture of her and conveyed his surprise to Buddha 34, who at once ran up to her, looked her over, and returned with the gleeful information that "she has no hole in her ear, so she is a eunuch." This was a stroke of luck, for the eunuchs of the former Imperial Palace were precisely the sort of outcast group that excited Cartier-Bresson's curiosity. A day or so later, to the sounds of a nearby bombardment, he made his way with Buddha 34 to the Temple of Kang T'ieh, which stood some seven miles away, in a no man's land near the front; this temple sheltered a community of forty eunuchs, who formed the only remnant of the three thousand castrated servitors of the late Emperor Kuang-hsü's seraglio. Their head, by this time a Taoist abbot, had once waited upon one of the Emperor's concubines; as custom dictated, he would wrap her naked in a length of red silk and carry her to the foot of the Emperor's bed, so that she could crawl into it. The eunuchs were now working a patch of land; since all were holdovers from the pre-1912 regime, many were rather elderly. Cartier-Bresson proposed photographing them; he liked their beardless chins, as wizened as dried-up apples. "They said that times were hard for them," he reported, "so if I would be so kind as to give them a little money, they would be glad to

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33
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"Gerald, I'm switching to another channel."

• •

pose. I did not wait for that, nor for the sun to come out and put the apple quality of their skin in full value, and I shot them while clever and faithful Buddha 34 did them a striptease act, with some dollars to make the pleasure last." One of these eunuchs was immortalized in a portrait. We see him standing below the ornamental coping of what might be the temple's retaining wall, obsequious, epicene, his pointed ears just touching his skullcap. Apparently about to move out of the frame, he pauses, as if in a vision. Yet, surrounded though he is by a Surrealist scenography of sharply receding walls and the shadows of unseen objects, he is more than a theatrical "type," a scrawled chorus figure in a costume sketch: he is an individual, though as such absolutely unknowable.

So while the battle for China raged, the photo-reporter shot newsworthless people of such tenuous reality that they seem mere figments of the imagination—people who were surely of their place but not, or not only, of their time, for they belonged to eternity. Prowling slowly about the streets in search of "deep rich stuff," he encountered officers, courtesans, students, venders. Once, coming out of a temple, he began to follow a passing wedding procession. Drummers in green beat on golden drums, musicians blew pipes, children carried ornamental staffs, and then, grandly, came the berobed men of the family, followed by a silk-draped palanquin holding the bride. Trooping under a polychrome arch, the procession turned into a narrow lane, which led, after some time, to an open expanse beyond the city walls. It was wending its way forward,

> absorbed in the glorification of this marriage and its accomplishment, when at the horizon of our way appeared, moving up clouds of dust in the winter sun, an army marching. The retreating soldiers were not in order, they seemed to have been marching from the infinity of the Chinese plains to some gigantic adventure. Their origin seemed as untraceable as the origin of these streams of ants one comes across in the jungle. Our procession and the army finally met, passed each other, neither paying any notice to each other, as separate worlds never meet in a cosmic universe. Our procession had reached the house of the parents of the groom and the carriers were pushing the palanquin with its precious load through the narrow gate, while the army was still passing by, on their way to meet their fate somewhere.

The photos of this wedding are now rare, but the commentary is revealing in itself. Innocent of the battlefield, half avoiding the events of the day, Cartier-Bresson is attracted by the spectacle of a parade, and, like a small boy, falls pliantly in with it; yet where does this parade lead, after a sudden swerve, but straight to an army in disorder, whose very retreat looks to the beholder like a "gigantic adventure." His point of view, in which even defeat figures as high romance, is eminently pictorial; he knows, like Delacroix, that there is a savage beauty in disaster. But, typically, his glance is also moral. In looking away from the frenzies of conquest toward the small or middle-sized stirrings in the landscape, he focusses on those things that abide. His thirst for the pictorial allies him with the people, whose tiny endurances fit perfectly into the frame of his tiny viewfinder.

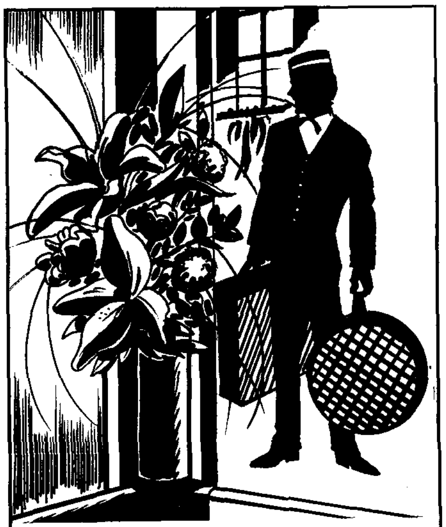
In mid-December, Cartier-Bresson returned to Shanghai, and he and Ratna took an apartment in the Broadway Mansions, where much of the press was quartered. Their room was somewhere near the top of this seventeen-story building, overlooking the Suchow Canal and the Garden Bridge; during his first days there, he would often stand by the window and contemplate the view. Beneath the bridge drifted the houseboats—the famous sampans—which reminded him of ice floes in their ever-changing configurations, while along the Bund the "buffalo-men" struggled under their loads, dropping from time to time some article at which swarms of street dwellers would desperately lunge. Longshoremen unloaded bales of cotton under the eyes of the homeless, who would swoop in and carry off handfuls under their clothes, scuttling swiftly away from the truncheons of the police. Once, Cartier-Bresson observed a crowd of refugees boarding a ship, some peering through binoculars to get a sense of where they would be heading; a week earlier, a similar boat had sunk, taking with it three thousand souls.

One morning, he made his way through the dense traffic on the Bund to the building where *Life* had its offices. Not far from the entrance, a large crowd had gathered, with the aim of withdrawing gold from the four government banks nearby. This crowd always appeared during business hours, but today it was swelling by the minute, and Cartier-Bresson soon realized that he was witnessing a massive run on the Shanghai gold vaults: the Kuomintang currency—the so-called gold yuan—was collapsing. He dashed upstairs to make a phone call, and when he returned the lobby was filled by a "sour-smelling" overflow crowd from the Bund. Retreating back upstairs, he stationed himself at a window and began shooting the scene. By then, a detachment of mounted police was trying to hold back the people, but they surged relentlessly forward under the cover of passing trucks and trams. In the aisles between the traffic lanes, the policemen sallied forth, occasionally bending to beat people with the steel ramrods they normally used for cleaning their rifles. After observing the struggle for a while, Cartier-Bresson remembered that one of the besieged banks was situated on an alley bordering the building he was in and clearly visible from one of its windows. From this vantage point, he discovered a long file of people compressed between the desperate crush behind them and the tellers' windows in the bank up ahead. No one wanted to be forced out of line, so the bodies were being squeezed more and more tightly together, and the taller people seemed caught up to the neck by some writhing, slithery being—like Laocoön being strangled by the snakes. The police, he noticed with some surprise, were behaving not unkindly, merely splashing the people with the water in the gutter, or thwacking them with ramrods and stray umbrellas; most of the people wore quilted Chinese clothing, which absorbed the force of these blows, and nobody's head was bleeding. Both sides seemed to observe implicit ground rules.

Cartier-Bresson felt that "looking from a window a few feet above the crowd was not right, and a little sadistic." He tried to work his way out through the lobby but got locked in the mass of straining bodies. For over an hour, people rifled through his pockets and eyed his camera, some even asking its price. Eventually, he made his way outdoors, but by this time order had been largely restored. Two women were scavenging for lost shoes and umbrella ribs; across the Bund, the stevedores were still hauling their loads, humming plaintively while the cotton thieves darted about them.

From the "Shanghai Gold Rush" Cartier-Bresson derived one of four or five great photographs of his first sojourn in China: it shows a rhythmic centipede of tightly packed people. Though there is, perhaps, a certain surreality to this picture—Cartier-Bresson later described the queue as "a human accordion, squeezed in and out by invisible hands"—it remains primarily a news shot. Cartier-Bresson is not simply raiding Shanghai here—milking it of bizarre imagery, like Max Ernst cutting up Victorian catalogues for collage material—but neither is he conforming to the usual practices of photojournalism. In framing this picture, he fails to include any clue to the narrative meaning of the scene: we see no sign of a bank, no bars of gold, no mounted constabulary—nothing but the unexplained human accordion. Here "the decisive moment" is really that of the photographer's own intuitive realization, as he peers across the alley at the crowd, that the perfect visual metaphor for civil strife has been delivered into his hands. What no image of wounded soldiers or bombed-out buildings could possibly convey is rendered, in all its anguish, by this snapshot of a bunch of people caught between a force behind and a force ahead.

One of Cartier-Bresson's friends in China at this time was Anne Ford Doyle, a former reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, whose husband, Bob Doyle, had become *Time's* bureau chief in Shanghai in mid-1947. I visited Mrs. Doyle recently in Georgetown, where she now lives. She told me how Cartier-Bresson would float along behind her on the street and suddenly pop up over her shoulder with his camera. "That way he had of taking a picture and then innocently walking on as if he hadn't—it continually saved him from arrest or worse," she said. "For such a nervous person, he could be incredibly cool when the occasion required it. He always had two cameras with him, and one day—this was after Shanghai had fallen to the Communists, and all foreigners were under grave suspicion—we were riding in a crowded streetcar together, and he discovered that one of his cameras was missing. He showed me where its strap had been cut with a razor. The streetcar was approaching a



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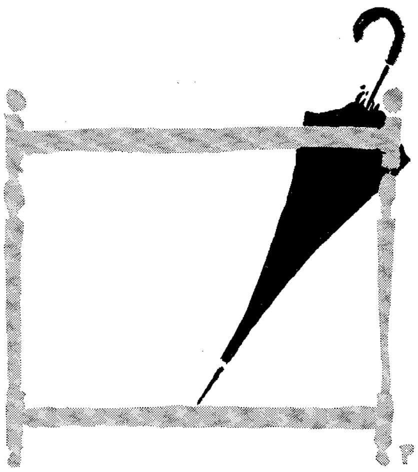
stop, and without a moment's hesitation he signalled to me, and we jumped to the ground. Then Henri frisked each passenger who got off—he did it nonchalantly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world—and he began to look increasingly crestfallen as he realized that no Leica was turning up. One final passenger got off, and he didn't have the camera, either, but as we climbed back onto the car we saw it lying on one of the steps, off to the side. That frisking was really audacious, because the vehicle was full, there were people clinging to the outside, and any one of them could easily have spotted him. But nobody noticed him at all, and the car moved on."

After side trips to Hong Kong, Hangchow, and Tsingtao, Cartier-Bresson arrived in Nanking in early April of 1949. Though Nanking was still the Kuomintang capital, Chiang Kai-shek had virtually abandoned it, in the face of a million-strong Communist Army encamped on the far shore of the Yangtze River. Cartier-Bresson sniffed around the town's commercial center, which seemed overcome with lassitude: soldiers and townsfolk got about on ponies and in wheezing vehicles, and cabs often bore dense clusters of people. The variety of costumes—cut-rate foreign uniforms, pom-pom-bedecked ceremonial hats worn for want of anything better—suggested comic opera or an early Chaplin movie. Some soldiers were taking advantage of the lull in the fighting to get a shave or a leeching in the street, and toward nightfall, by the Drum Tower, small throngs gathered around the professional tellers of tales.

Cartier-Bresson departed from his usual concentration on the sideshows of war when he saw the opportunity for a portrait of a significant player: in Nanking, he snapped General Ma Hung-k'uei, the Nationalist governor of Ningsia Province. This portrait is so compelling a depiction of a physiognomic type that you think "warlord" even before reading the caption. Powerful as a panda, encased in muscle and fat, the General slouches before three vertical panels of political bombast. The photographer noted in his commentary that Ma was notorious "for his Muslim soldiers and his taste for ice cream served by his young wife," and that he "has the body of certain sculptures of the Buddha but none of the features of the face." This sly comparison of bully and Buddha can be felt in the formality of the portrait, which may owe something to Cartier-Bresson's earlier visit to the shrine of "the laughing Buddha Maitreya," in Hangchow; now, before the personality type he most loathes, he plays the decorum of the composition off against the strongman's smug, menacing aura. What we see is brute domination masquerading as spiritual authority.

As Cartier-Bresson's China sojourn drew to a close, a valedictory note stole into his dispatches. He was about to take leave of the gymnasts in the public gardens, the ambulant ear-cleaners and tale-tellers and barbers, the merchants of painters' brushes, the old antique dealer who spoke of a "Chinese" deftness in the drawings of Nicolas Poussin. Hoping that the Chinese Communists, with their evident love of homeland, would see fit to preserve the finer elements of this world, he booked passage for himself and his wife aboard the General Gordon, a British steamer. All of European Shanghai was struggling to escape, and the pier was crowded with stateless wanderers—White Russians, and German Jews, and Portuguese half-castes from Macao. There were the Afghan, the Argentine, the Brazilian, the Siamese Ambassadors; elegant ladies with their lapdogs; a band of Eurasian children. At last, the ship sailed—"a bubble out of Shanghai"—and a whiskey party was held to the music of a fiddler and an accordionist from the Silk Cat night club.

So it was that Cartier-Bresson helped to create one of the most provocative social roles of the twentieth century—that of the professional picture-taking witness. This role, like that of the professional mourner, involves a privilege: the photojournalist is an interloper and does not share the destiny of those whose plight he records. On this score Cartier-Bresson has not lacked for critics. John Malcolm Brinnin, who travelled across America with him in 1946, later described him as "a humanitarian indifferent to people," a man whose leftist "rigidity of mind obviated argument and enjoined silence." And Susan Sontag, clearly with him and his colleagues in mind, has characterized the photojournalist as a "supertourist" engaged in "middle-class social adventurism" and the "sublimated looting" of non-European cultures. Cartier-Bresson himself resorts to Norman equivocation when this subject arises. Sometimes he claims the high moral ground: he speaks of "living with the people" and "respect for the subject," as if such pieties had anything to do with the ruthless invasiveness of all honest observation, be it photography, writing, or portrait-painting. At other times, though, he grimly concedes the point. Obviously, he was troubled by his inadvertently "sadistic" overhead viewing of a crush of impoverished Chinese, and by the "bubble" that so gaily bore him away from the miseries of Shanghai. He ruefully admits that one does nothing with impunity. Yet, by and large, his testimony has been warm and unbiased, and if his rebellious Surrealism seems to us today a mere contortion of the bourgeois liberal mentality it must also be granted that—whatever his aim—he represents that mentality at its most humane.



Cartier-Bresson's venturesomeness belies a certain prudence, a frugal expenditure of energy and feeling; he is confidently at home within the Latin tradition of visual economy. In his pursuit of experience, he has shown that an age-old gestural syntax, a lyrical architecture of bodies in motion, exists not only in Classic art but also in the wide world. Coming as a final, empirical confirmation of French painting, his work has also imparted to his often humble and exotic subjects a formal dignity based on pictorial structure rather than on sentimentality or "false pastoral." This exchange, this mutuality of world and picture, is the real heart of his testimony.

RECENT criticism has tended to split Cartier-Bresson's photographs into two fairly discrete blocks: the early, Surrealist work, executed primarily from 1932 through 1934, and the later, journalistic work, executed primarily between 1947 and 1966. There is a kernel of hard fact to this view, for the early photos were taken by an unpaid amateur indifferent to documentation, whereas the later ones were mostly intended for magazines; and it is doubtless no accident that the early pictures were first displayed in museums and an art gallery, while the later ones initially appeared as published illustrations of news stories. Nonetheless, the dichotomy is not wholly convincing.

Actually, most of the American audience for photography may have been unaware until recently that Cartier-Bresson ever was a Surrealist. In the autumn of 1987, however, Peter Galassi, the curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art, mounted an exhibition titled "Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Early Work," and the pictures he selected, together with his fine catalogue essay, conclusively demonstrated the importance of Surrealism to Cartier-Bresson's early development. In particular, two Surrealist techniques—the dreamlike juxtaposition of objects that do not rationally belong together, and the "exile" of an object from its everyday context—were amply illustrated by the photographs on view. Even a cursory glance at their subjects—women who seem to pop out of walls, a man smoking under the gaze of three nose-twitching epicures in a billboard ad—confirmed the truth of Galassi's proposition. Yet at the same time he mildly overstated his case, thereby obscuring the bond between Cartier-Bresson's Surrealist and photojournalistic impulses. "His early photographs," Galassi wrote, "have virtually nothing to do with photojournalism; indeed they insistently and quite inventively subvert the narrative expectations upon which photojournalism depends." This assertion reflects an understandable concern to protect the early work from inaccurate labelling, but it is somewhat inaccurate itself. Galassi's catalogue contains many examples of photojournalism: about a quarter of the plates in the book reveal Cartier-Bresson's deep interest in social conditions—especially those he found in the slums of Mexico City and Juchitán. Though they do not tell a cohesive story to a specific audience, they are still a kind of reportage, for all serious journalism begins as a report to one's own heart. Any reasonably broad definition of journalism—one that had room for imaginative figures like Daumier and Orwell—would easily encompass these pictures. Cartier-Bresson's Surrealism is probably not dissociable from his photojournalism; there is much to suggest that the two have always functioned in tandem.

Since Surrealism insists on the primacy of dreaming, and since anyone who strolls about a metropolis with a camera can easily find some very dreamlike material to shoot, it has often been claimed that photography is "natively Surrealist." And this is true, but only partly true. Because the camera is confined to the realm of wakefulness, it cannot penetrate the dream world. The dreamer's eyes are closed, the photographer's are open—indeed, if he is a good photographer, they are very open. Unlike the poet, the musician, or the painter, the photographer can never let his mind wander; he certainly cannot let it enter the current

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Peering over the bar, you spot a bottle of Ballantine's Finest.

"Hmm. I haven't had that in a while."

"One of the better blends," your friend says. "Number one in Europe."

So you order Ballantine's and water.

"It has 42 different single malts in it," he says.

"Really? Does that matter?"

"Only if you like your Scotch to be smooth."

You take a sip.

"It is smooth. How come it tastes smoky?"

Your friend explains, "That's from Highland single malts in the blend. Taste it again. It has an earthy flavor, too."

You do and it does.

"That's peat. From the Scottish islands. See, with blended Scotch, the single malts are married together to enhance each other. But you can still taste the individual flavors."

"You know too much. How am I supposed to keep up with that?"

"We have time," he says. "Another round?"

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First, you need water. Scotland has more than enough, because it rains so much. And the best, because on its way to the burns and lochs, Scottish water is naturally filtered and purified as it flows through granite or peat.

Second, you need peat. Peat, to put it delicately, is a layer of compressed vegetable matter covering about 1,700,000 acres in Scotland. That's 11% of the entire country. That's a lot of peat. You can taste the peat in a great Scotch like Ballantine's Finest. What you do is cut it into logs and burn it in kilns to stop the malting of your barley.

Third, you need barley. Barley is one of those grains that thrives where you might think only rocks would grow. Which is why it does so well in Scotland. You malt your barley by soaking it in water, then drying it over the peaty fire. Then you grind it, mix in hot water and let it sit for a few hours. Add a little yeast to the liquid and the sugars turn into alcohol. The barley has done its job. You can feed it to cattle.

Fourth, you need cattle. Some of the happiest cattle in the world live in Scotland. (Not to mention some of the best tasting.)

Fifth, you need a still. These are the funny looking copper pots without which there would be no Scotch. It is said that Aristotle invented distillation. But sadly, he never lived to taste a fine Scotch like Ballantine's. After distillation, you have whisky. Which longs for barrels in which to grow old.

Sixth, you need barrels. There aren't many oak trees left in Scotland. At least not enough to age Ballantine's Finest. So you need oak barrels imported from America. Once your Scotch is in the barrels, you need to put them away for a long time.

Seventh, it helps to have an ocean. There's a refreshing scent of sea air in a select few of the single malts used in Ballantine's. Some say it creeps into barrels stored near the ocean. In any case, it adds distinction to the Scotch.

It may be that Scotland is the best place to make Scotch precisely because there's no point more than 70 miles from the sea. Kansas is not a good place to make Scotch.

And last, you'll need patience. The only thing left to do is wait. If you want your Scotch to be part of Ballantine's Finest, you'll have to wait quite a while, because we don't blend any malt whisky younger than five years. Patience is essential when starting your own distillery. But, as you've read this far, it would seem that you have a good supply of it.

Whew! If the thought of all this work makes you feel a bit tattered, you might enjoy a glass of Ballantine's Finest. Maybe you don't need your own distillery after all.

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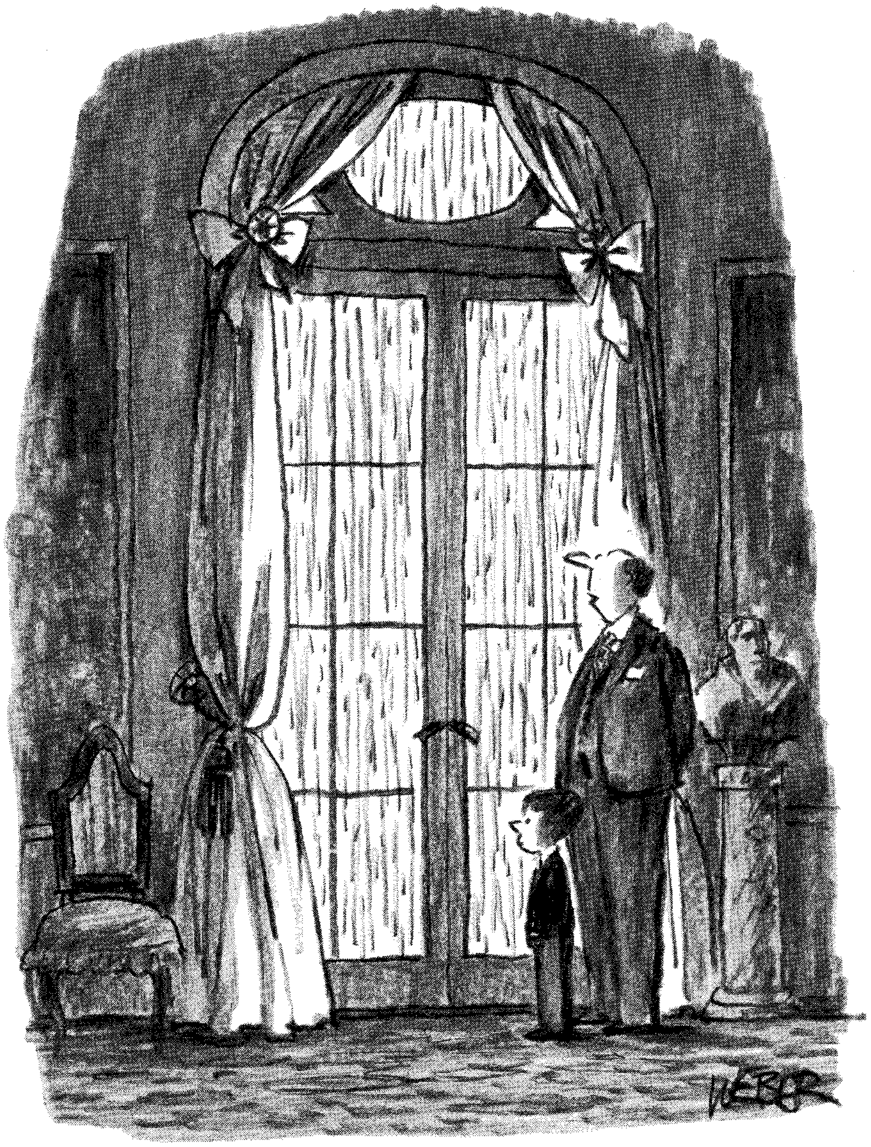

"There's a lesson here, son. Being rich doesn't stop it from raining."

• •

of a reverie or a trance. Freud, who had a great influence on the Surrealists, would surely have said that the photographer responds not to unconscious but to preconscious stimuli, to concerns that lie just below the surface of awareness. The camera, so apt at registering the outside world, cannot except circuitously and superficially apprehend the inner one. It plumbs not the dreaming state but, rather, the phantasmagoric aspects of reality—what the Surrealists called the Marvellous.

As you look over the lineup of Cartier-Bresson's Surrealist photographs, you may well begin to feel that the whole endeavor shows small but telltale signs of strain. Genuine images of the Marvellous occur only intermittently, and often there seems a conscious longing for serendipitous coincidence. But Cartier-Bresson was too good a photographer to be an orthodox Surrealist, and he appears to have early surmised that his Surrealist impulse would gain in suppleness if he could hitch it to some more easygoing activity—some activity for which the camera has a truly natural vocation. This was supplied by the element of reportage.

Those critics who have approached Cartier-Bresson's work under the spell of a sort of aesthetic bimetallism, identifying in his pictures two separable standards of value, have overlooked the essentially dependent nature of surreality itself. Breton and his colleagues assumed that the surreal world cannot, by nature, exist save within the real world: it requires some medium or atmosphere in which to be suspended. And, very early, the Surrealists felt a distinct attraction to the small dramas that tend to catch the interest of the city reporter. They realized that embedded in the surface of everyday news stories lay a trove of suggestive or equivocal details—"equivocal" was a word the Surrealists liked—which, upon close inspection, turned into a doorway to the exotic and the bizarre. Though the Surrealists never created any substantial body of journalistic prose, the writings of some of them—and especially those of Louis Aragon—contain a fair amount of what might be termed hallucinatory reportage. In his autobiography Aragon characterized his viewpoint as a sort of "Surrealist realism"; this phrase aptly describes Cartier-Bresson's viewpoint as well.

Though the Dream is not really accessible to the camera, the Marvellous, which occurs where reality resembles a dream, became the stuff of Surrealist photography. One of the qualities of the Marvellous, as the Surrealists almost at once discovered, was that it tended to turn up in any place *you didn't know or understand:* you could enter the domain of surreality not only by exiling objects from their logical surroundings but also by exiling yourself from your own habitat. This insight gave rise to a Surrealist technique called "the cretinizing voyage," in which you boarded a suburban train and rode aimlessly about the outskirts of Paris until you lost your bearings and almost your reason—until you became, in the going parlance, a cretin. Only in the cretinous state could you begin to perceive the irrational, dreamlike relations of things. Once, the poet Paul Éluard went on a really audacious cretinizing voyage and by dint of transferring haphazardly from trolley to train to ferry to steamer ended up in the New Hebrides. In a way, this excursion of Éluard's—half vagrancy and half pilgrimage—was the prototype of Cartier-Bresson's first long sojourn in the East. When the photographer went to India in 1947, he was "cretinously" ignorant of the subcontinent's customs and languages, and that very ignorance worked to his advantage: it allowed his vision to register coincidences and conjunctions that a trained eye would have slid over too knowingly. Ironically, it was a bourgeois profession that brought him to this land of the Marvellous, and perhaps the most marvellous thing about the whole episode was that *Life* wound up footing most of the bill.

BY becoming a photojournalist, Cartier-Bresson forfeited a lot of control over the fate of his photographs: in the offices of the picture press, they became "artwork," to be switched about and scaled up or down by professional layout people. Fortunately, the graphic design at the magazines where his work was published—most often *Life*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Holiday*, and *Paris-Match*—tended to be strong and effective. Though he tried to see to it that his images were never cropped, he had few qualms about letting art directors compose layouts with his work; often he didn't even get a chance to see his photo essays until months after they appeared in print. Many of his finest pictures were eventually collected in book form, and in this ongoing process he gladly yielded responsibility for sequencing and design to his publishers. The first of these was the great art impresario Tériade; then came Robert Delpire, an enterprising young publisher who was also a layout ace and an expert on photography. Another person who has had a large influence on the appearance of Cartier-Bresson's published pictures is Pierre Gassmann, the founder and former director of Pictorial Service, a Paris photo lab colloquially known as Picto. Gassmann began printing Cartier-Bresson's negatives in 1947. Today, he is semi-retired, and lives with his family on a quiet street off the Rue de Rennes. Though his actual age is seventy-six, he looks more like sixty, and he has young children.

When I went to see Gassmann, he was sitting in the middle of his large, pale-yellow parlor with a huge book about southwestern France in the Middle Ages lying open on a table before him. A watchful man with a tough, wised-up expression, he told me that he had been brought up in Breslau (now Wroclaw), where his mother was a radiologist. As a child, he grew so accustomed to looking at X-rays that the reading of negatives became second nature to him. He began taking photographs at thirteen, and submitted his pictures to the sympathetic scrutiny of Paul Klee and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, both of whom were friends of his mother. After finishing his studies at a local *Gymnasium*, he went to Berlin to

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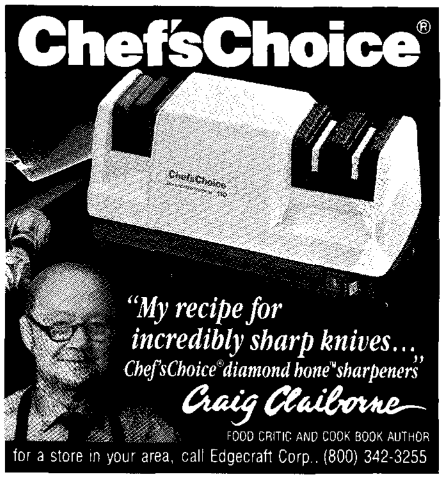

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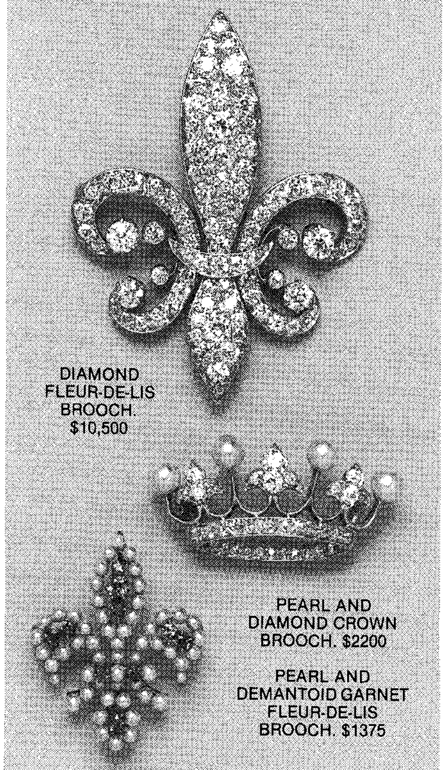

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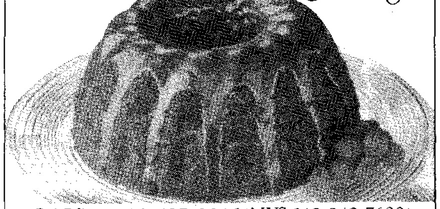

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study law, but he also enrolled in several serious photography courses offered by the Agfa company. He joined the Young Communist League as well, and when the Nazis came to power, in 1933, he sought refuge in Paris. The city cast such a spell on him that he spent a lot of his time just wandering around with his camera; he also discovered that Brassaï, the great Hungarian photographer, lived in his building. Before long, either through Brassaï or on his own, he had met many of the best photographers then working in Paris—André Kertész, Robert Capa, David Seymour, Erwin Blumenfeld, Philippe Halsman, and others. A number of them were, like himself, refugees from Central European Fascism. At the Dôme, in Montparnasse, where the art crowd palavered far into the night, he would often encounter Cartier-Bresson. ("Henri was a fixture at the painters' table," Gassmann told me, "and when I got to know him better I realized that he always had three or four girls trailing after him.") During the war, Gassmann served first in the French Army, then in the Toulouse Maquis; after the Liberation, he worked for a while as a photojournalist, but on the whole he preferred his friends' photographs to his own. He was fascinated by darkroom technique, which bored most of them, so in 1950, at Capa's suggestion, he founded Picto. It instantly became Magnum's semi-official lab, and today has five branches in Paris, with a combined staff of more than two hundred people, and a sixth branch, in Toulouse. Gassmann personally printed Cartier-Bresson's photographs for only a few years, but his team continued to give them the look he had established.

"For fifty years, Henri and I have been screaming at each other," he told me. "For example, we do an exhibition together, and Henri says, 'This one we throw out,' and I say, 'No, we keep it,' and he says, 'We throw it out,' and I say, 'Good, then throw out the whole damn show!' That is the way it is with us. Listen: one day, he decided to cut his favorite negs out of a batch of film, and do you know what he did with them? He tucked them behind plastic strips in a stamp album—'because I don't want those negs manipulated,' he told me. And then he gave me this whole book's worth of little cut negatives—what a nightmare! Believe me, I had to stop him from throwing away hundreds of others—wonderful shots of the liberation of Europe. You have to have nerves of steel to work with that man. Yet, in spite of it all, there's a sort of complicity between us. Sometimes he wouldn't get to see my prints until several months after I made them, and when he did he'd just say, '*How?*' It was simple—I felt them, like a musician reading a score."

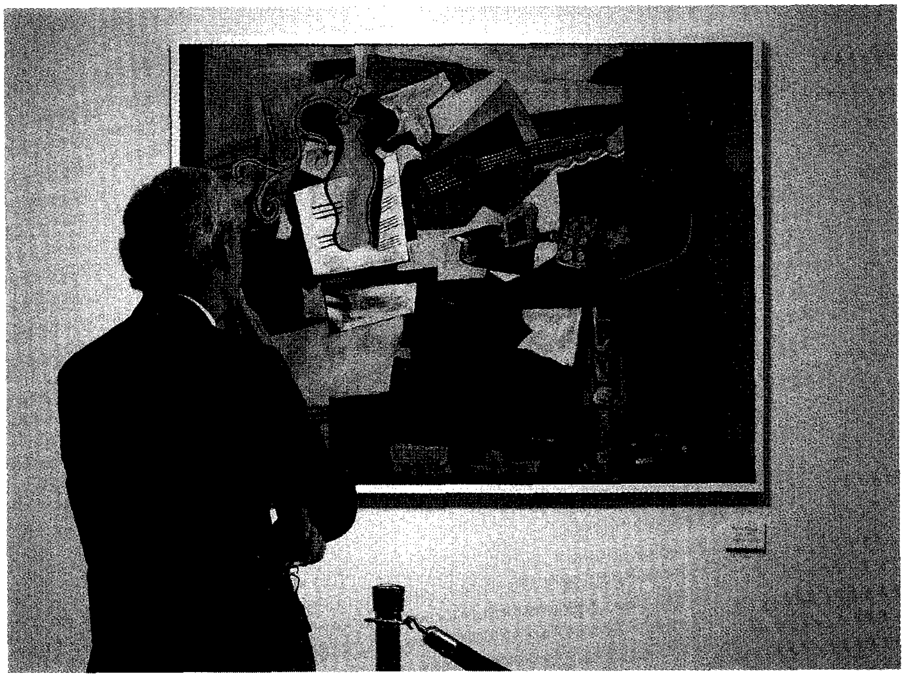
Gassmann is five years younger than Cartier-Bresson, but he spoke of him as one might of some splendid, spoiled, charming younger brother who has got away with murder since the age of two. "The thing to remember about Henri," he said, "is that he is a Cartier-Bresson." He looked at me gleefully, as though he had opened a closet on a skeleton. "I used to visit him sometimes at the family home, on the Rue de Lisbonne—by the way, the building's front door was as wide as this room—and I saw how he had grown up. You know how Henri is always trotting out these preposterous opinions, and Martine says, '*Voyons donc, Henri*,' or '*Calme-toi, Henri*'—well, that's just how his mother handled him." Gassmann gave a slow, guttural, Central European laugh. "She's wonderful, Martine—just what he needs. When he told me he was going to marry her, I said, 'You really are a Cartier-Bresson,' and he said, 'What do you mean?' He was all in a huff, you know, as if I'd insulted him. I said, 'Look here, Henri, you're not marrying your concierge.' "

When Magnum was founded, Cartier-Bresson's little studio near the Place Vendôme became a hub of feverish activity. "We all shared our insights, our ideas," Gassmann told me. "No one ever knew which idea was whose, and it didn't matter. Our relations were strictly unserious, just good fun. In those days, Chim"—this was David Seymour—"was Henri's closest friend, but Robert Capa was the one whose advice Henri would absolutely follow. Capa was unselfish, very expansive, always short of money, yet always able to find it for his down-at-the-heel pals. He took the risky jobs—the lucrative jobs—in order to pay his debts. In the end, it's not surprising that he was killed, in Indo-China. But, then, Chim, who was extremely careful, was also killed, in Egypt." Gassmann fell silent for a few moments, and closed his heavy-lidded eyes.

"Speaking of Capa, how about a sip of the Capa drink?" he said, looking up briskly. He left the room and returned a moment later with a bottle and two glasses; he popped the bottle open and poured us a round.

"So—you like the Capa drink? Champagne! Nothing but good champagne! He'd buy it in magnums, which gave us the name for our agency—we hadn't been able to think up a suitable one. I want to make it clear that Capa was antiheroic. All these stories about his being a war hero are ridiculous. I asked him, 'Isn't it dramatic when you parachute out of a plane?,' and he just smiled at me. 'It's not particularly scary to jump,' he said, 'nor particularly hard to go down. But when you hit the ground in a hail of bullets and discover that your pants are full, and you have to take them off—*that's* dramatic.' You know what sardonic eyes Capa had—you see them in that famous Willy Ronis picture. Well, believe me, Robert Capa was laughing mostly at himself." Gassmann's brow had turned into a net of lines. He took a sip of champagne and brightened again.

In the early days of Magnum, he told me, Cartier-Bresson would shoot at least one roll of film every day that he spent in Paris. Even if he was working in the studio all day, he would still be obliged to run around the corner for some bread or wine, and on the way he would be sure to see something, and then something else, and then more things. Gassmann again insisted that there were hundreds of fine shots among Cartier-Bresson's old negatives. He also told me that Cartier-Bresson never used a light meter, or even looked at his f-stops, knowing all this by memory and touch, and that he shot the golden section instinctively, not through calculation. He had no special nose for a good scoop—rather the contrary—but, wherever he happened to be, he saw more than anyone else, and he saw faster. Often other photographers couldn't keep up with him and so couldn't work alongside him. Gassmann recalled that during the general strike of May, 1968, Cartier-Bresson had hitchhiked from Brussels to Paris to cover the street battles. Every morning, Picto received rolls of film from people shooting all



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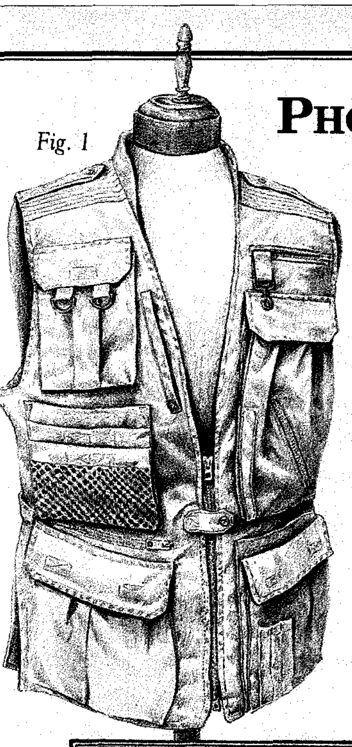

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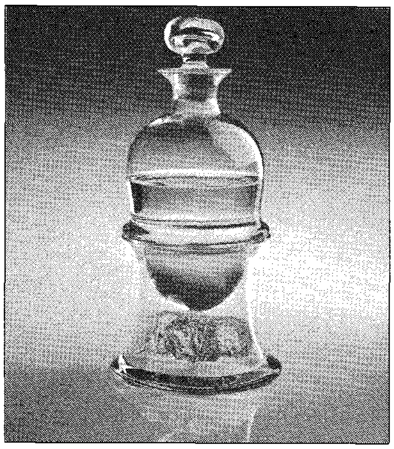

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day and all night, but from Cartier-Bresson, surprisingly, only bad work. "I knew what he was up to, and I said to him, 'You were put on earth to observe, Henri. Please stop joining in the demonstrations and take some *pictures*.' The next day, as I was looking through all the proofs that had come in, I saw one that was fantastic, and when I turned it over I found that it was labelled 'H.C.-B.' And this is the whole thing about Henri: in order to be really present, he must be absent—he must forget himself."

Gassmann refilled our glasses. "I have to ask you a question," he said in a conspiratorial tone.

I told him I would answer as best I could.

"Are you staying with Martine and Henri?"

"I'm staying in the studio," I said.

"But you go to the apartment pretty often? I bet they invite you over for dinner—and, after all, Martine is such an excellent cook."

"Yes," I said. "I go over there pretty often for dinner." I was beginning to feel like a police informer, but I wanted to know what he was so curious about.

"I wonder if you could tell me," Gassmann said, "if you have observed Henri when he's watching TV."

Yes, I told him, I had. I'd seen Cartier-Bresson watch the news on TV. I'd even found out that Christine Ockrent, France's most adulated anchorperson, had once been his associate on a documentary-film project. I was about to give Gassmann my impression of Cartier-Bresson as a TV-news watcher—the peevish outbursts, full of anarchistic vituperation—when I suddenly saw that I had fallen headlong into a trap. Gassmann was smiling exultantly.

"I knew it," he said. "Henri tells me he *never* watches—oh, he *never*, *never* watches."

"It's just the news," I said. "Nothing else."

"I don't even watch the news," said Gassmann proudly. "All those images are so badly framed it really pains me. I was very sick in the hospital last year, but I had to leave anyway, because the TV was on all the time. The other patients wanted it on, and the staff wouldn't turn it off. Actually, it was Martine who helped get me out of that place. I don't particularly mind the noise, but I just cannot stand those badly framed images. They're a terrible strain on the nervous system of any visual person. And I doubt whether Henri can stand them for long, either, with his sensitivity. But to say he *never* watches!"

We talked on for a while, until we had emptied the champagne bottle. "You know," Gassmann said as I stood up to leave, "Henri has tried to play the social rebel, and he has tried to play the self-made man, but really he is neither of those things. I know, because we know each other's illusions, Henri and I—he likes to say we've been married far too long to get a divorce now. And I tell you—Henri, like his father and his grandfather before him, is simply a man who can make something everyone wants. There's nothing wrong with that, but it makes me laugh. I tease him about it. I tell him, 'Henri, you are a Cartier-Bresson. You have something to sell.' "

THE French have an expression, "to roll someone in flour." It means to make sport of a person's vanity, or his pride, or his failure to see who he is. You can roll him maliciously or you can roll him fondly, and if you do it fondly you're really implying—backhandedly, of course—that the dear fellow's foibles only add to his charm. Quite a few of Cartier-Bresson's friends told me that they liked to roll him in flour, and the reason for their affectionate chaffing seemed always to be the same: the gap between his self-image and his image in the minds of others. And, indeed, one comes away with the impression that Cartier-Bresson the social being is a sort of permanent double exposure, for next to the anarcho-Buddhist pepper-eating knife-puller stands a less colorful but equally extraordinary figure—an old-fashioned well-bred gentleman who has absolutely mastered the art of watching other people. The problem, as some of his friends see it, is that he fails to recognize that his patrician origins are written all over him. This most clear-sighted of men seems blind to the truth that for him as well as for his subjects it is the little things that betray background, and that these things are not only indelible but instantly readable. Pronunciation, manners, fine discriminations play together in this unconscious self-presentation, and even when, as in the present case, every major high-bourgeois prejudice has been sternly banished, the minor ones remain to tell their unmistakable tale. A contempt for the ersatz, a love of the timeworn and the perishable, a horror of consumer society and the spread of parvenu taste, a heartfelt leaning toward the peasant and his works—all are classic signs of a patrician sensibility. Even the modest style of life, the exquisite simplicity of this man who has sometimes affected to be living in straitened circumstances, betray not "the stingy Norman" (as Cartier-Bresson so inaccurately characterizes himself) but the wealthy Parisian burgher mortified by displays of luxury. In this respect, the picture that Cartier-Bresson offers of his rich grandparents darning socks and lamenting their ruin could easily be retouched to include him.

Since getting to know him, I have also heard a great deal of excited talk about his remarkable impatience, his inability to plan, his fastidious irresolution at the minor crossroads of life. His capricious temper inspires amazement, hilarity, long garlands of tales, but I have never heard it more curiously characterized than it was one afternoon at the home of Romeo Martinez. Cartier-Bresson had described Martinez to me as "the photographer's father-confessor, the man who knows more about us than we do ourselves." A Mexican, the son of a prominent Veracruz family, he served as a political commissar for the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM) during the Spanish War, and later became the editor of *Camera* magazine. Martinez has Zapata-like cheekbones and eyebrows like bits of fur trim. He lives in a high-ceilinged apartment off the Rue de Seine which was once part of the palace of Margaret of Navarre. He sat in the drifting silver light of his sitting room and talked of Cartier-Bresson's collection of knives, and of how Cartier-Bresson was always doing something other than what he appeared to be doing, and of how hard it was to induce him to speak openly of himself. "Henri is an unstable person," Martinez concluded. "But, you must understand, he makes a point of it. He is *scrupulously* unstable."

I had been keeping a mental list of the mixed metaphors and skewed paradoxes that Cartier-Bresson's friends so often used when they wanted to sum him up. He was a cat that was also a

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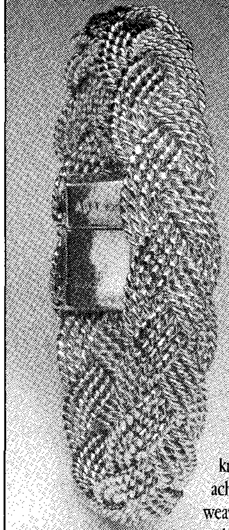

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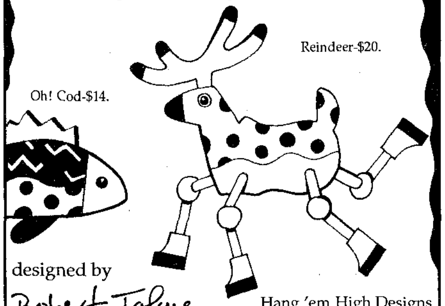
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bird; a vulnerable predator; an absent presence. He adored his friends yet had the curious habit of pulling knives on them, and though his past was visibly on file at Magnum, his memory was a sieve, as if to suggest that the pictures in the contact sheets were recollection enough and he didn't need the redundancy of pictures in his head. One could never decide whether he was a naïf, a faux-naïf, or some weird hybrid of the two. My pile of metaphors had grown muddled, and here, to perplex me still further, was this Mexican father-confessor disclosing that Cartier-Bresson was "scrupulously unstable." The phrase had a cerebral, Jesuitical ring, but it also said something genuine about Cartier-Bresson's habits of feeling. There really was a scrupulosity in his way of courting chance, of looking carefully about him, of giving every new minute and every adjusted angle its due.

Hadn't that very scrupulosity often forced him to relinquish emotional moorings, to forfeit convenient or hard-won positions? At the age of twenty, he had given up his position behind the easel in favor of a sort of permanent truancy with the camera; then, one day in his mid-sixties, he decided he wanted that old position back. There seemed to be several reasons for this ultimate display of instability. For one thing, he had never been much interested in the bulk of his photographs, preferring those rare images in which the arrested tableau held some haunting ambiguity, some drama whose next moment lay beyond divination. "It takes a lot of milk to make a little cream," he likes to say, and the cream was all he really cared about. He left Magnum in 1966, and he freely confesses that by then he was getting tired of the labors of photojournalism (though not of landscape shots or of spontaneous portraiture). Several of his friends, principally Tériade and the painter Richard Lindner, perceived this, too, and encouraged his rekindled interest in drawing. He even began to wonder if photography had not played the role of "calisthenics, decoy, alibi"—as his pal Saul Steinberg later suggested to him—in relation to a deeper vocation for drawing.

There was perhaps another, more emotional reason for the reversion to an earlier fascination. In 1967, after a long period of domestic disharmony, Cartier-Bresson and Ratna Mohini were divorced. In 1970, he married Martine, and two years later he became, for the first time, a father; his new and happier existence must surely have played a role in his abandonment of professional photography. One gets the impression that he deliberately reduced the speed of his perceptual life, that he began to take a renewed interest in the idea of picture-making as a form of meditation rather than of interception.

In returning to the art of drawing from observation, Cartier-Bresson bravely cut his line of communication with the public; he descended from nearly unequalled eminence in the photography world to mere membership in the little lagoon of Parisian representational art. There was a certain logic to his decision, however. Of all the great photographers of our century, Cartier-Bresson is the closest to serious modern art—by early training, ongoing self-education, and social preference, for he has always cultivated the friendship of artists. The composition of his photographs is so evidently an extension of painting ideas that even if he had never executed a single drawn or painted image, a chapter on his camera work would not be out of place in a history of modern French painting; his life has evolved alongside, and in rapport with, the lives of Christian Bérard and Avigdor Arikha and Georg Eisler and Giacometti, to name but a few of his artist friends. His move into drawing was a clear-eyed attempt to distill the purely structural elements of his pictorial vision, leaving the Surrealist and social elements behind in the retort of experience.

Cartier-Bresson was so serious and humble about improving his drawing that he decided he needed a critical eye. He took to discussing his work with Sam Szafran, a well-known Paris artist who had grown up in a building with an unusual staircase, had become obsessed with staircases, and painted them all the time. Before discovering art, Szafran spent his early youth as a ruffian on the streets of Paris. His speech is colorful and barbaric; he is the only person I know who insults people to their face and praises them behind their back. He mischievously told Cartier-Bresson that he would help him with his drawing in exchange

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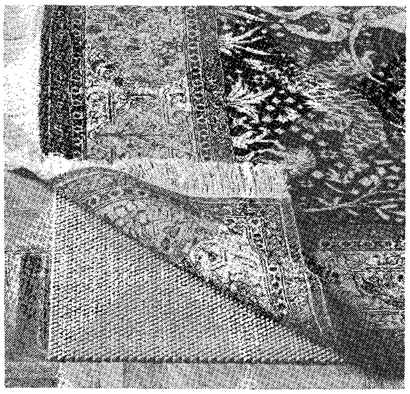

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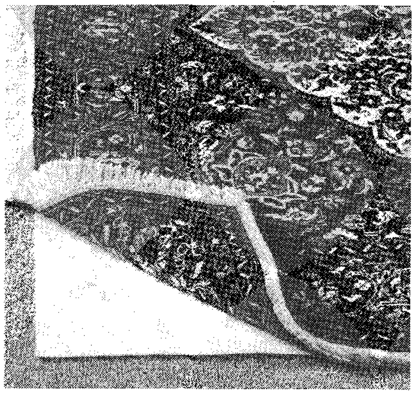

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for a fee to be paid in photographs, and in this way he acquired a strong collection of prints. He also insisted that Cartier-Bresson photograph a friend of his, the Paris-based American sculptor Joe Erhardy, and Cartier-Bresson, who naturally winced at this pressure but wanted Szafran's help, gave in. They went together to Erhardy's studio and spent several hours there, but Szafran waited in vain for Cartier-Bresson to start shooting. When at last they came out onto the street, Szafran was furious, but his anger vanished when Cartier-Bresson held up a pair of fingers and calmly said "Two."

"I didn't see a thing—I never even saw him lift his camera," Szafran told me over lunch one day near his studio, in the Malakoff section of Paris. "Everything about him amazed me. And he was so utterly courageous and industrious when he set about drawing. Ethically, he is very scrupulous"—I noted the reappearance of this word—"and it shows up in his work. I discovered that I couldn't be objective about Henri. I loved him, I hated him, I was wildly jealous of him. I still am. His photos and his drawings compose a total unity, because they are sincere—an expression of the man. But if photography is like respiration for him, drawing is like perspiration. It's hard for him, he takes endless pains. You know, it was after he married Martine that he took up drawing as a profession, and one reason he has so much energy is that he's in love."

Cartier-Bresson began to draw almost every day, a practice he has continued up to the present. Comprehensive shows of these drawings have been held at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford and the gallery of the École des Beaux-Arts. From the outset, his approach has been that of a dedicated artist. Circumspect about his work and eager for tough criticism, he has none of the amateur's easy self-satisfaction, and he nurses no illusions that his drawings will command the same reverence in the world of art that his photographs do in the world of photography. He draws cityscapes, landscapes, portraits, the model; he has also done many studies of the skeletons of prehistoric animals. Most often he uses pencil, sometimes ink. He hasn't much manual facility and isn't at all interested in gracefully running his mark around the edges of things, so his drawings lack topographical specificity; his hand weaves and shuttles. You see right away that the drawings are really "painters' drawings"—conceptions of possible arrangements—but they are painters' drawings for paintings that will never exist, and to appreciate them you have to know how to read a painter's drawing as a poetic thing in itself. Generally, they are most successful when he mentally encompasses some perceived structure—a city block, a mountain, a prospect of tilled fields—in what seems a single contemplation, a long, unblinking glance. Then the most cursory placement on the page bears witness to his power as a composer. Yet his vision as he draws is not a sort of stretched-out photographic seeing or elongated "sniff." An artist friend of his aptly remarked to me that his move from snapping to sketching was "like trading the crest of the wave for the trough," and clearly the whole point of life in the trough is that you can be much more aware of what you are doing while you are doing it. Cartier-Bresson's mental processes at the moment he frames an image in the viewfinder are—for us, at least—a point of mysterious darkness, but his thoughts before the drawing board transpire as in a light-filled chamber. Drawing is a struggle that takes place in the open, and one suspects that Cartier-Bresson, who had always photographed with too much ease, longed for this exertion. He longed to put his wide-ranging visual intelligence to the test, and also to try for the depth of meaning that comes only from surmounting obstacles. Once, I quoted to him a famous line by Valéry about the artist's need for resistance, and his face lit up in assent.

The works of a first-rate visual imagination have this unique feature: that after you have seen a certain number of them each additional one recommends itself not only on its own behalf but also as a peek into a fascinating mind. Much of the appeal of Cartier-Bresson's drawings lies in their way of showing us how he can manually piece together just the kind of delicate pictorial maze that he used to pull out of the air. The sketches that he did some eight years ago near the Swiss village of Épesses, for example, bear witness to an unfailing resourcefulness in the wedging together of landscape elements—vineyards, hedgerows, terraces, lopsided walls. And, of course, this is really the same angular vocabulary that he explored in some of his photographs—his shots of cafés, for instance, with their wilderness of receding tabletops. Seen en bloc, Cartier-Bresson's drawings vary from the humdrum to the inspired, but all disdain irony and self-consciousness and the overcrafted look, and all have sincerity and naïveté and truth to perceptual experience.

As a social being, Cartier-Bresson advertises an intense delight in his own indiscretion. As if to spite his natural courtliness, he regularly flies off the handle; as if to mock his urbanity, he rails at the bourgeoisie. Small wonder, then, that his attempts at public invisibility should sometimes yield unexpected results.

One evening not long ago, he and Martine took me along to a chamber-music concert that was to be given in a private apartment. The largest room had been almost entirely cleared of its furniture, in whose place stood a grand piano, a music stand for a violinist, and

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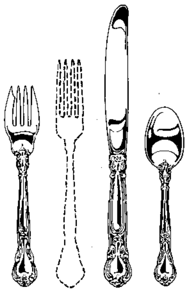
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several rows of auditorium chairs ranged in a semicircle. Most of the chairs were already taken when we arrived, so the three of us found places close together at one end of the audience. As we sat down, I saw that Cartier-Bresson was peering intently at something through his wire-rimmed glasses, and I followed his gaze. At the other side of the room, two youngish couples sat next to each other, and as the violinist and the pianist took their places and played the opening chords of their first selection—it was a Schumann sonata—the two couples, shifting slightly, assumed a remarkably rhythmic group pose. It was as if they had found an archetypal attitude for the physical act of listening—for listening as a distinctly chic yet still serious activity. Then one of the women inclined her head, and Cartier-Bresson whispered "Now." He tapped his index finger in the air. Then he took a little sketch pad out of his jacket pocket and started to draw, but there wasn't much light on his page, so he gave up drawing and followed the music. The evening's program was relentlessly Romantic—Schumann followed by Debussy, Debussy followed by César Franck. At the end came Franck's bittersweet Allegretto, so beloved of French radio programmers. Then the lights came up again.

Cartier-Bresson turned to me. "César Franck wrote the sort of music that reduced my mother to tears," he said. "She would sniff and fumble for her handkerchief. But I cannot say that I care for it. It is too—*unbuttoned*. But Debussy I love. He is a pagan. He reassures me that the monotheists are wrong—that none of us has a separate, eternal soul." He flashed a look of cheerful gratitude at the piano. "Debussy reassures me that we are all part of the compost heap of nature, the beautiful cycle of growth and decay."

We passed into another room, where a buffet had been laid; the books had been removed from the bookshelves and replaced by a multitude of cakes and tarts. For a while, the guests ate and drank, and chatted about the music and the news of the day and the nocturnal views of the city which brimmed outside the windows. Then they prepared to leave.

As Cartier-Bresson and Martine and I stood in the vestibule waiting for the elevator, a stranger addressed

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Cartier-Bresson. He was of middle age and wore horn-rimmed glasses and an expensive-looking dark wool suit; he might have been a financial analyst. It appeared that he had overheard Cartier-Bresson voicing his opinion that Debussy expressed a strain of reawakened paganism, and he began to affirm his own belief that the spirit-power of the universe ran through everything that existed on earth. Cartier-Bresson was all attention, but a cloud soon passed over his face. "That is pantheism," he said when the man had finished, "and I am not a pantheist. Whatever Debussy's convictions may have been, I do not believe in any sort of soul at all."

But the middle-aged man insisted that he and Cartier-Bresson shared some common ground. Didn't the very fact that they were standing there discussing such matters imply as much? And it was true that Cartier-Bresson was relishing the back-and-forth of the argument; as the two talked on, there were nods of affirmation, head-waggings of dissent, hands sketching thoughts in the air. Though neither metaphysician was prepared to yield to the other, both were keenly enjoying themselves—so keenly, indeed, that they forgot the pressure of the crowd behind them. Deeply embroiled in their attempt to solve the riddle of existence, they failed to notice that the elevator had now come, and that one of them, the elderly chap in the wire-rimmed glasses, had already found room inside it, while the other, the middle-aged chap in the horn-rimmed glasses, had not. Yet still their debate went passionately forward, while in the hallway, which grew ever more congested with music-lovers wishing to go home, word went rapidly around that the source of the holdup was none other than Henri Cartier-Bresson. He couldn't see himself, but they could.

—DAN HOFSTADTER

(This is the second part of a two-part article.)

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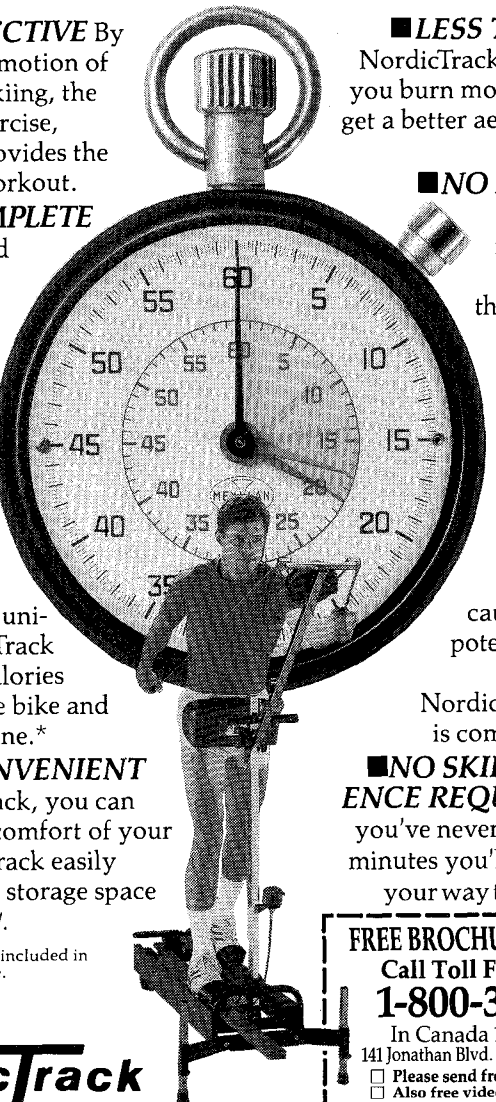

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

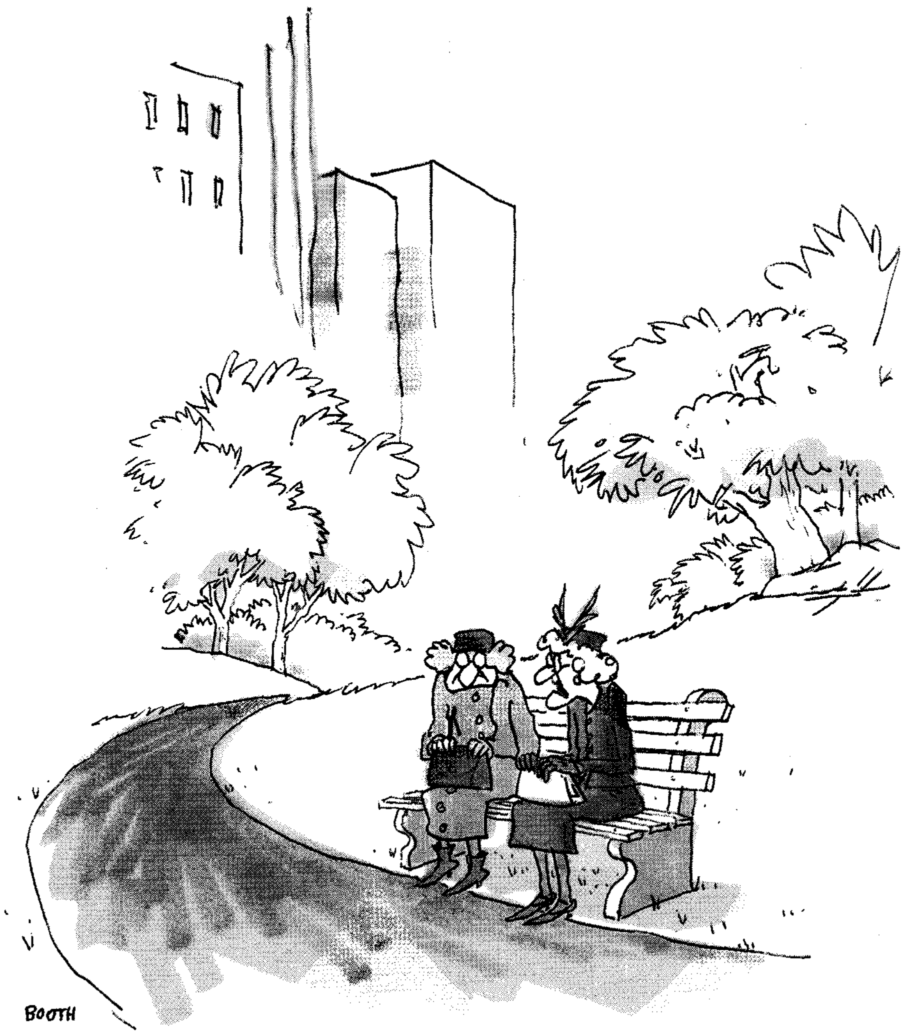
Floating

NIHILISTIC humor rarely bubbles up in a movie as freely as it does in "Drugstore Cowboy." The jokes aren't fully formed, and they don't seem prepared for; they just occur, almost passively, as if they were a haphazard part of how the director, Gus Van Sant, looks at things. After trying Los Angeles and New York, Van Sant moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1983. This is the second feature he's made there. The first, the 1986 "Mala Noche" (Bad Night), is a story of romantic obsession, shot in 16 mm., mostly in black and white, and made for twenty-five thousand dollars; it's the story of Walt (Tim Streeter), a young clerk in a skid-row convenience store, who falls hopelessly in love with a Mexican boy, a tease who accepts handouts from him but derides him as a "stupid faggot." Based on a short novel by the Oregon poet Walt Curtis, "Mala Noche" has a wonderful fluid, grainy look—expressionist yet with an improvised feel. It has an authentic grungy beauty; at moments, it's reminiscent of Jean Genet's short film masterpiece "Un Chant d'Amour."

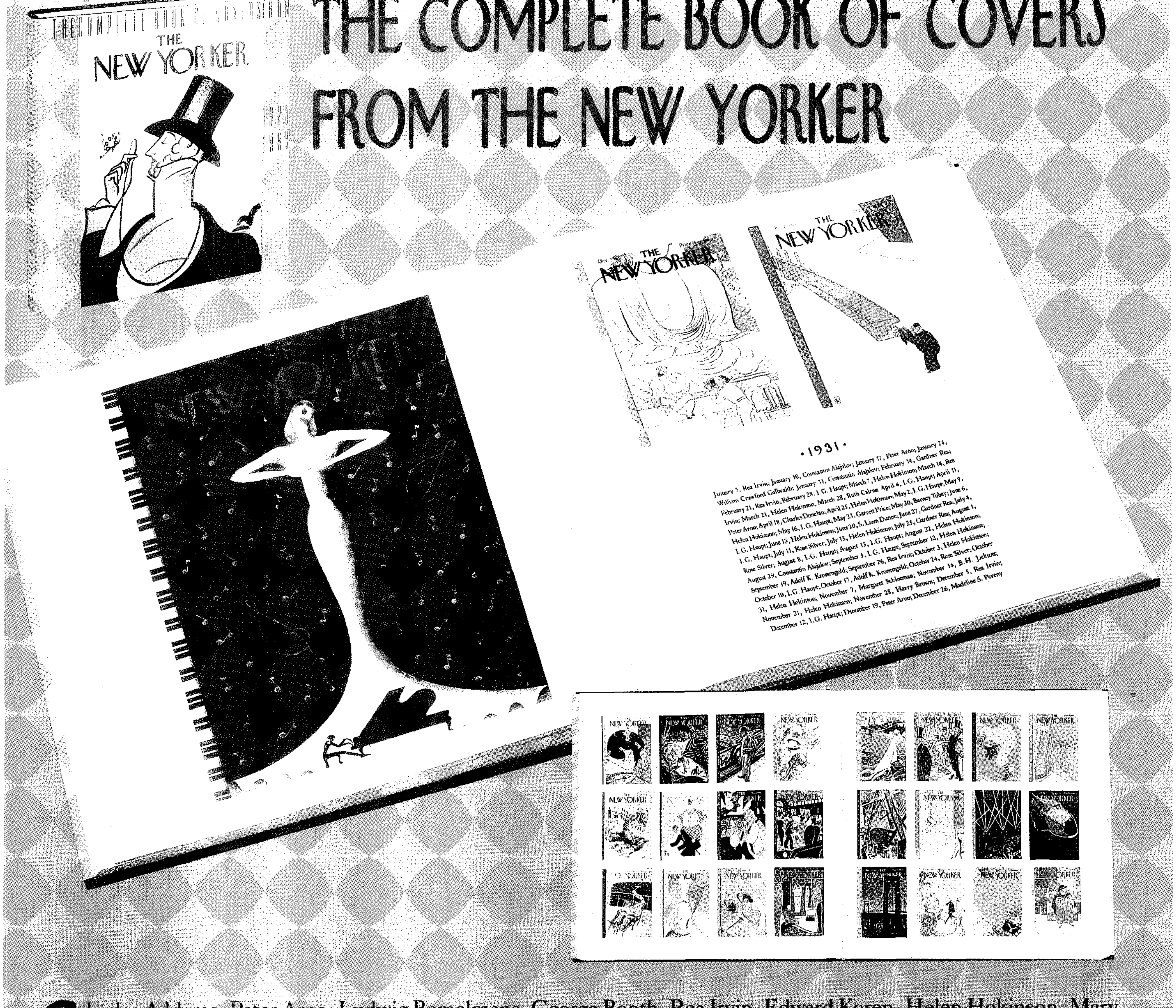
Van Sant's new film is less affecting, but it has a distinctive drug rust. The screenplay, by the director and Daniel Yost, is based on an unpublished novel by James Fogle, who has served time in several West Coast prisons for drug-related robberies. He is now about ten years into a twenty-two-year sentence in the state of Washington, and is scheduled after that to do time for a drugstore holdup in Wisconsin. (He's fifty-two.) Set in 1971, the movie is about two couples who live together and travel around the Pacific Northwest robbing hospitals and pharmacies, grabbing fistfuls of pills and capsules. They're like a junkie version of Clyde Barrow's gang. Woozed out as they are most of the time, and living from high to high, they plan the robberies in knotty detail. The group's twenty-six-year-old leader, Bob (Matt Dillon), takes his duties very seriously; his planning is like a simulation of a workingman's job. But as soon as he's in the getaway car, with his wife, Dianne (the talented Kelly Lynch), behind the wheel, he gives himself a fix. The robberies themselves are thrills, but the moving around, the anxieties, and all the strategy sessions are wearing Bob down. He has been in prison a number of times, and he lives in a maze of superstitious thinking: anything that has ever been associated with trouble with the police becomes an omen, a source of terror, and so a hat on a bed or the mention of a puppy can freak him out. (Dillon brings the role a mixture of macho presence and light self-mockery that helps set the mood of the film.)

When Bob is high, something in him seems to float free. His visions (we see them in simple, animated form) suggest a child's image of the cow jumping over the moon (and the music suggests lullabies). Yet we can also feel the weariness in him. The couples are presented as a squabbling family, and Van Sant keeps us aware of what babies they are, and of how the drugs make them feel pleasantly unhinged and give them the illusion that they're being taken care of. Bob is a baby, but he's also the father; he's smarter than the others, more responsible, and capable of thinking of the future. Rick (James Le Gros) is still just a dumb kid, learning the ropes, and his teen-age girlfriend, Nadine (Heather Graham), is a wide-eyed blond cutie—perhaps no more than sixteen—who wants to be accepted and have fun. (She's like an infant Angie Dickinson.) The only one Bob is close to is levelheaded Dianne; they were childhood sweethearts and have been together ever since. But he's lost his sex drive (he may be taking drugs partly to avoid the demands of sex), and that vacancy in their lives is separating them. By now, much as drugs mean to him, they mean more to her.

As the strategist, Bob plots the group itinerary so they can always get



"I'm not Spanish, but every afternoon about one-thirty I go upstairs and lie down awhile."



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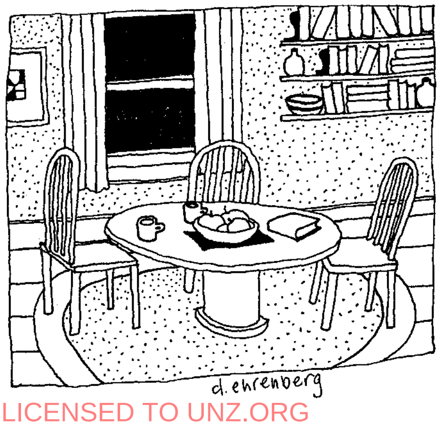
high; the four travel by car and send their cache of drugs ahead by bus, parcelled out to a series of stops. These four petty thieves scrounging for pharmaceuticals are so inept that the police are always right on their tails—it's like a game of Keystone Thieves and Keystone Cops. Their skill isn't in their thefts; it's in how effectively they hide their stash. When they go on the road, they cut a hole in the car floor; if they have to dispose of what they're carrying, they know they'll be all right at the next bus station.

The movie takes us inside a lot of underground attitudes, and the director likes these attitudes—he enjoys them, even though he's grown beyond them. The druggies are monomaniacal about leading an aimless existence; they're proud of wasting their lives. During their robberies (which are generally a shambles), and even during their scrapping, they see themselves as romantic figures. (They're comic, but they're not put down for being comic.) When Bob applies to enroll in a methadone program, he explains to the social worker (Beah Richards) why people use drugs. He says that they're trying to "relieve the pressures of their everyday life," and, speaking slowly, as if he had no idea what example he was going to come up with, he says, "like having to tie their shoes." Dillon delivers a line like this so that it sounds utterly natural. We grasp what he's saying while we sense the exhaustion behind it. But now it's the drug life that's exhausting Bob.

When Bob is trying to break free, he renews his acquaintance with Father Murphy, the defrocked priest who, years before, turned him on to drugs. He doesn't resent what the old man did to him; drugs have given him pleasures that he doesn't get from anything else. And seeing Bob's tenderness toward the scrawny, formally attired old father figure helps us understand Bob's nature. But the film errs, I think, in casting William S. Burroughs as the junkie priest. Dillon is acting, and Burroughs isn't, quite. He does have a performer's booming voice, and he stylizes his big line about narcotics' having been "systematically scapegoated and demonized." But elsewhere the movie undercuts its characters' bravado, even as we're amused by it; it doesn't undercut him, and his scenes are too much of a guest-hipster number. Someone like Roberts Blossom could have played the role and acted it, staying in tune with Dillon.

"Drugstore Cowboy" has a superficial resemblance to "Bonnie and Clyde," and it may recall the detachment of "Repo Man" and something of Jim Jarmusch's comic minimalism. But Van Sant isn't just a fan of his characters' style; he partakes of it. This is a believable absurdism. Van Sant accepts the kids in the drug subculture (and in the skid row of "Mala Noche") without glamorizing adolescent romanticism (the way "Rumble Fish" did). A speed freak named David (Max Perlich), a little guy with an overbite, suggests the ratty kid at school that everybody avoided—can he really be dealing drugs? You smile every time there's a cut to Nadine's junkie doll face. (When the actress has a scene where she has to act a little, she isn't up to it, but a soft face like that would compensate for a lot worse acting.) Van Sant's films are an antidote to wholesomeness; he's made a controlled style out of the random and the careless. He rings totally unexpected bells. Dianne complains to Bob, "You won't fuck me, and I always have to drive." "Drugstore Cowboy" keeps you laughing because it's so nonjudgmental. Van Sant is half in and half out of the desire of adolescents to remain kids forever.

IN "Crimes and Misdemeanors," Martin Landau is an eminent ophthalmologist who's trying to get rid of his hysterical mistress (Anjelica Huston) in order to save his reputation and his marriage (to Claire Bloom). His course of action raises serious ethical issues, which he discusses with his rabbi friend (Sam Waterston), who's going blind. That going blind is quite a touch! No, it isn't meant to be a giggle. It's part of the film's controlling metaphor. When the doctor was a boy, he was instructed at home and at the synagogue that "the eyes of God are on us always." "Crimes and Misdemeanors," written and directed by Woody Allen, is a sad, censuring look at the world-famous doctor and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching.



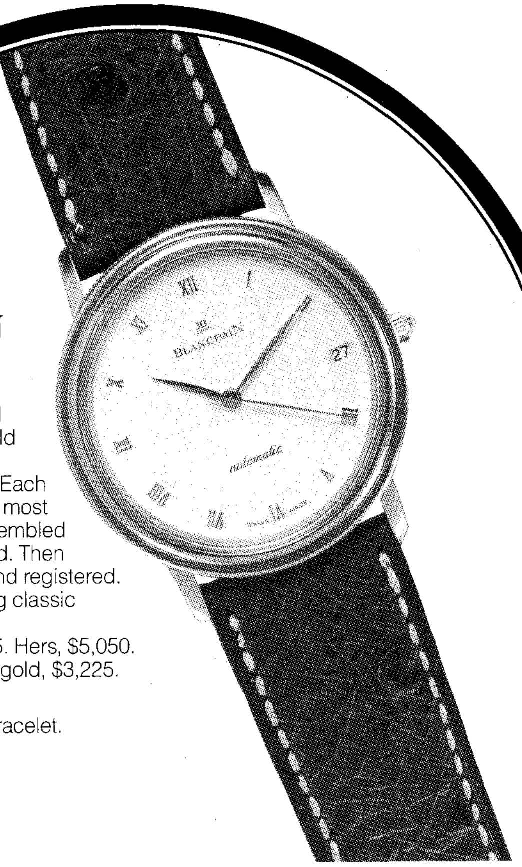
Landau is at his best when the doctor, trying to calm down the tiresome woman, can't help showing a New Yorker's nervous impatience. He brushes aside her claims that she's made sacrifices for him and he hasn't kept his promises; you feel the intimacy behind the arguments, and you can see the signs that his blood pressure is rising. This is the preliminary bout—it's preparing the audience for the crime to come—and Landau's actor's instinct not to waste any time meshes perfectly with the doctor's need to get away from this accusing monster. (We aren't asked to have any feeling for her; we see the situation strictly in terms of her threats to break up his marriage and expose his financial manipulations.) The doctor's predicament is so stale that Landau's gestures of impatience are the only saving elements.

Convinced that he has been forced into it, the doctor takes action to save his hide. Then he agonizes over what he has done, and in his disordered thoughts he revisits his childhood *shul* and attends a Seder at his childhood home; he listens to the old wisdom (If a man commits a crime, he will be punished), and he hears it crudely challenged. Now the impatience is ours. Woody Allen isn't a clone of Ingmar Bergman this time; he's a clone of Arthur Miller. Of course, there's a difference. In Miller's plays you can see the wheels grinding but what happens has some punch. Allen keeps a polite distance. The doctor's self-torture has been worn smooth by generations of playwrights—it's ponderously abstract. And there's a difference befitting the era. Miller's guilty father in "All My Sons" (1947) killed himself. Allen's much admired doctor who cheats on the most basic human decencies is meant to be symptomatic of the Reagan eighties. He learns to live comfortably with his lack of conscience. (And we can feel morally superior to the "successful.")

The tediousness of Woody Allen's attempt to deal with weighty questions is that he poses them in conventional, sermonizing terms. He appears to be pinning contemporary greed and crime on man's loss of belief in God. The movie represents a peculiarly tony form of fundamentalism. The sets, the clothes, and Sven Nykvist's cinematography all take the color out of color; there's no vulgar vibrancy here. And the cutting is let-the-edges-show modern. But Woody Allen seems to be telling us that believing there's a God who's watching us is our only safeguard against committing murder. He opens another possibility by introducing a boring humanistic thinker—Professor Levy (Martin Bergmann), a survivor of the camps—who tells us that it's we, with our capacity for love, who give meaning to the indifferent universe. But this possibility is given a flip finish: the professor's philosophy doesn't sustain him. The picture is saying that God may not exist but man needs to believe in Him in order to find meaning in life. (The professor goes the way of Alain Cuny as the voice of reason in "La Dolce Vita.") Meanwhile, the plot line shows us that the doctor isn't punished, so he stops fearing God. It was only fear that kept him "moral."

In a parallel story line, where the misdemeanors take place, Woody Allen himself appears as a grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker—a man trying to be true to what his camera eye sees. His wife (Joanna Gleason) keeps denigrating his accomplishments, and can't even be bothered sleeping with him. She's a well-connected woman: her two brothers are the rabbi and a darling of the media, a celebrity TV producer, played by Alan Alda. This egomaniac who is taken for a creative genius is the movie's satirical villain: he's tall, he's facile—he's everything that the little-guy documentarian fears and despises. And at first the little guy's raging jealousy is quite funny; it's the comic rage of the harmless—he's so preoccupied with exposing the producer's phoniness that he can't get anything else done.

Alda plays the enemy with a smug, screwy abandon; it's almost like an Ernie Kovacs turn. At a party this genius gives, he's suddenly struck by the brilliance of something that has come into his head and, afraid of losing it, he pulls out his tape recorder to preserve it. Alda is the one actor in "Crimes and Misdemeanors" who



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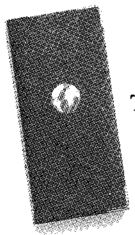

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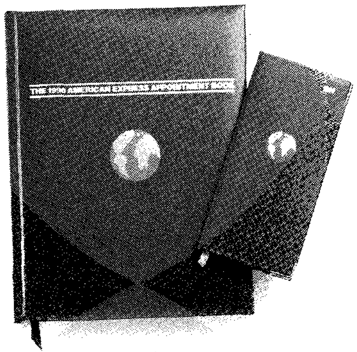

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doesn't seem to be on automatic pilot. His performance may remind you that he used to be a member of Second City (in New York), and that before his eleven years on "M*A*S*H" he took on challenges like Caryl Chessman in TV's "Kill Me If You Can." (He may have become too professionally affable in "M*A*S*H," but he didn't really earn his bad name until he went overly earnest in movies like "Same Time, Next Year" and "California Suite," and in the ones he directed, like "The Four Seasons.") The other actors perform very proficiently, yet (except when I was watching Landau's nerves being rubbed raw and seeing how intently Jerry Orbach played the doctor's shady, subdued brother) I didn't feel caught up in anything they said or did. (That includes even what Claire Bloom said and did: she has no more than a glorified walk-on.) Woody Allen's once sharp powers of observation seem dulled here. But the whirlwind TV genius is alive and making an ass of himself. The character is cheaply satirized, but you like him for his self-infatuation.

Did Woody Allen know that he was letting Alda steal the picture? I think he must have. There's a wide streak of masochism running through this movie. The documentarian is worse off than Zelig: he falls in love with a Public Television associate producer (played by Mia Farrow), and they have a rapport, but he can't compete with the pontificating genius. The documentarian is the man with impossible ideals, the total loser; it's the villains who win. Woody Allen is tweaking his own high-mindedness, yet he also appears to be revealing himself more nakedly here than in his other movies; he appears to be saying, "This is who I am." But it may be a false nakedness—a giving in to the safety of weakness, to the feeling that nobody wants an honest man. His bald masochism in the later part of the picture is a betrayal of his jokester's personality.

The two halves of this movie don't fit together in a way that sets off reverberations. You can intellectualize connections between them, but you don't feel a connection. Woody Allen's abrupt changes of tone as he moves from one set of characters to the other, and overlaps them, keep you from getting restless; he has become a skillful director. But he's making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. And it's awkward to see him playing the pathetic failure—standing in his editing room against a Chaplin poster and trying to make time with Mia by showing her footage of the wise, aged professor who lived through the Holocaust. (When he had a date with Annie Hall and took her to see "The Sorrow and the Pity," it was a better joke.)

If Woody Allen were interested in drama (rather than pieties), he wouldn't make us reject the emotional plight of the doctor's mistress. The camera loiters on her rear end, as if to dehumanize her; she's presented as hulking and insistent, like the knife-wielder in "Fatal Attraction." So the doctor's final acceptance of his crime against her has no horror. The film's emphasis is confusing: the spectator has more anxiety about the doctor's possibly revealing his crime to the authorities than about what he does to her. And if you don't care about this woman—or about the little suffering documentarian—this is just one more of Woody Allen's class-act movies. It comes complete with reassuring words about how most human beings have the capacity "to find joy from simple things, like their family, their work, and from the hope that future generations might understand more."

There's no avoiding the recognition that Allen has been coming up more and more with praiseworthy themes. Sam Waterston, having played Oppenheimer and Lincoln and William L. Shirer on TV and Sydney Schanberg in "The Killing Fields," is perfectly modulated as the blind rabbi, the good, moral man afflicted by fate. How can the funnyman who assembled "What's Up Tiger Lily?" resist putting dirty words in that exemplary mouth? The answer is that Waterston's performance here suggests a blue-blooded Woody Allen. And the documentarian, when he's lost everything and is humbled, looks more dignified than before. Allen himself is turning into a rabbi. The years that he's been railing against the universe without definitive answers must have worn him down, so now he's supplying them.

—PAULINE KAEL

AMERICAN CHRONICLES

KNOWING JOHNNY JENKINS

ON the weekends, Robert Donnell likes to take the country roads. He's in no hurry. During the week, he has a stressful job—he works on the Texas Gulf Coast, supervising the switching of freight cars at the port of Beaumont—and his idea of how to refresh himself during his free time is simple: "Put it in neutral. Don't pay nothin' no mind." When he travels between Beaumont and Austin, where his children live with his ex-wife, he often finds himself on Farm-to-Market 969, which cuts through rich pastureland along the Colorado River east of Austin. It's a peaceful stretch of road; in the springtime, its shoulders are often covered with bluebonnets. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon last April, driving back to Beaumont after watching his son play in a Little League game, Donnell got off 969 to give his dog some exercise and take a stretch himself. This was at a public boat ramp below a bridge in Bastrop County, about thirty miles from Austin. The Colorado River, which determines the shape of downtown Austin, continues from the capital all the way through Bastrop County on its way to the Gulf. Donnell often stopped at that boat ramp. He had lived in Bastrop County for a while, and he had often gone tubing down the Colorado until, in the building frenzy of the Texas boom in the seventies, the pollution from Austin sewage made the Colorado the sort of place you wouldn't want to float around in.

There was a time when 969 crossed the Colorado by way of a rickety old contraption known locally as Humpback Bridge, but a few years ago Humpback Bridge was replaced with a proper steel-and-concrete structure that has no name. Underneath it, there's a patch of concrete that includes not just a boat ramp but also some stairs going down the bank to the river, and a sign about the sort of safety check that should be made on any boat before it's put in the water, and a trash can, and even a picnic table, for people who don't mind having a picnic that's punctuated every so often by the rumble of a car overhead. The banks in both directions are thick with willows and cottonwoods. The Colorado is wide there, and rather murky—although, as a sort of silver lining to the bust that followed the seventies boom, there's less pollution than there once was. The water moves slowly, in a way that can sometimes be perilously deceiving to a swimmer who doesn't know about the undercurrents. The boat ramp under what was once Humpback Bridge is a sylvan spot, but not exactly remote. There is no other public boat ramp between Bastrop and Austin. The sheriff of Bastrop County, Con Keirsey, says, "People put their boats in there. People go down there to make love or sell dope or picnic—recreate." Sheriff Keirsey's deputies are in the habit of dropping by when they're in the area, just to make sure that none of those activities have got out of hand.

When Donnell got down to the boat ramp, he noticed another car, parked parallel to the river—a gold Mercedes, with the passenger-side door open and the left-rear tire flat. Next to the Mercedes was a wallet—empty except, as it turned out, for a Social Security card. Explaining later why he didn't just finish his stretch and move on, Donnell said that he's from a family with deep roots in Texas law enforcement. In fact, his uncle, Nig Hoskins, served as

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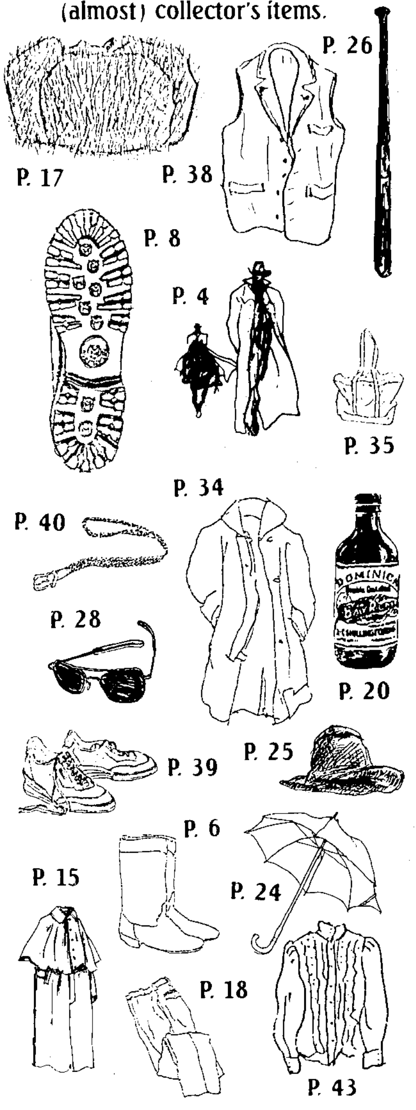

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the sheriff of Bastrop County for years before Con Keirsey took office. Donnell stopped at the county seat—a pleasant old trading town, also called Bastrop, that is only a few miles from the boat ramp—and turned in the wallet at the sheriff's office. The dispatcher sent a deputy named Jim Burnett out to the boat ramp to have a look. When Burnett arrived, the Mercedes was still there, and so were three fishermen. As he spoke to them, one of them was casting down the river, and, in an eddy where a thick willow limb dipped into the water, his hook snagged on something. It was a shirt. Caught up against the willow limb, just a few feet from shore, was a body. The cause of death was immediately apparent: a large-calibre-bullet wound in the back of the head.

The victim, it turned out, was the owner of the car and the wallet—John H. Jenkins III, a forty-nine-year-old rare-book dealer from Austin. Some of his friends said later that the drama involved in the discovery of his body was, in a sad way, appropriate, because Johnny Jenkins had always had a flair for the dramatic. Jenkins' supporters and detractors in the rare-book business agreed that he simply loved publicity. His death was front-page news not only because of the violent circumstances but also because he had often been on the front page when he was alive. After Robert Donnell happened upon the gold Mercedes at the boat ramp in Bastrop County, the Austin *American-Statesman* ran a story on John Jenkins that was headlined "BOOK DEALER'S LIFE READ LIKE A BESTSELLER." A piece on Jenkins by one of the paper's columnists carried the headline "WORD WILDCATTER LEAVES LEGEND."

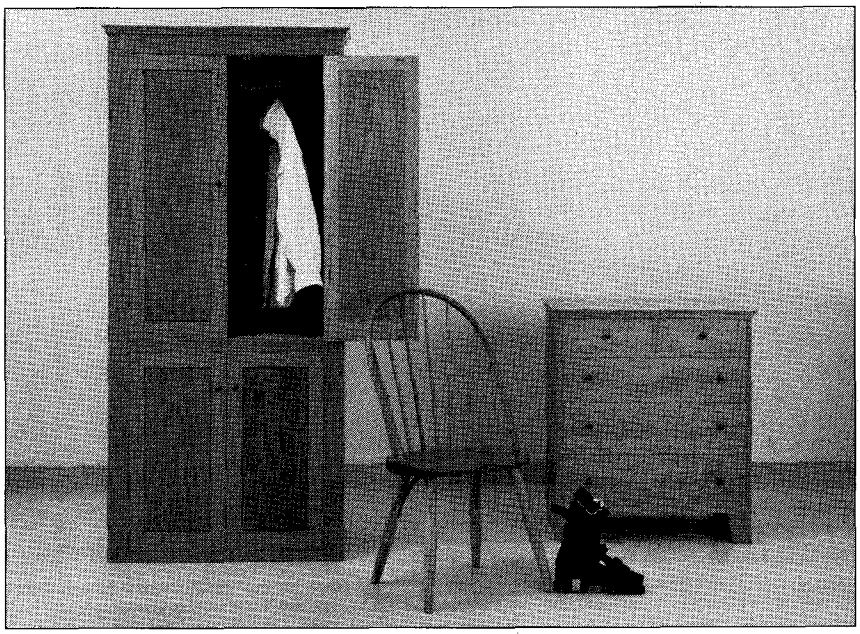
The legend was built partly on John Jenkins' being a bookdealer of such broad interests that he could be known both as the author of the standard bibliography of Texana, "Basic Texas Books," and as a poker player good enough to compete in the World Series of Poker, in Las Vegas, under the sobriquet Austin Squatty. There were standard highlights of the legend told whenever Jenkins hit the papers, and they were brought out on the occasion of his death: the story of how even before graduating from high school he found and edited and annotated the pioneer reminiscences of his great-great-grandfather and published them in a book that carried an introduction by the renowned Texas man of letters J. Frank Dobie; the story of how he sold his childhood coin collection to finance a round-the-world honeymoon; the story of how he rose from modest beginnings to become an internationally known bookdealer and the president of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America; the story of how he worked with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to ensnare some thieves who had brought him an Audubon folio stolen from Union College, in 1971; the story of how, in 1975, he bought the single greatest supply of Western Americana right out from under the noses of the Easterners and carted it back to Texas, trailing in his wake a gaggle of Yankee booksellers panting to get their hands on his treasure.

There were some disquieting stories, too, in those newspaper articles. John Jenkins was a man whose premises had been the scene of at least three fires, the last of which, in 1987, was ruled arson by the police. He was a man who had sold—innocently, he insisted—a large portion of some Texas Revolution letters and broadsides that began to circulate in the early seventies and were only last year, in a revelation that shocked the Texas rare-book world, demonstrated to be forgeries. He was a man who in recent years had experienced some serious business reversals unconnected to the book business—a disastrous oil-rig operation, for instance, and an equally disastrous attempt to turn an abandoned college campus into a conference center, and a feature horror film called "Mongrel," which may not have been in release even long enough for some smart-aleck movie critic to talk about what a dog it was. "I suppose he was a man who lived two lives," an old acquaintance in Austin said after the body of Jenkins was found. "Or maybe three."

THERE had been a time when the Jenkins Company was a sight to behold. This was in the late seventies, a few years after John Jenkins became a kind of instant star in the rare-book business by buying the stock of the Eberstadt brothers—dealers in Americana who had gradually withdrawn from the marketplace—in what may have been the largest rare-book transaction to that date. From the outside, the Jenkins Company didn't look like any rare-book shop that anybody had ever seen; it was a huge yellow corrugated-aluminum structure on the service road of I-35, just south of Austin. Jenkins had originally bought the building to use as a warehouse for his publishing enterprises—a company that did mostly reprints of books relevant to Texas history, and a vanity press that did books relevant only to the people who paid to have them published—but he had also moved his book business in after a 1969 fire in his store downtown. He always referred to the I-35 building as "the plant." Someone who entered the plant in those days expecting the sort of décor that might be customary in a warehouse on the service road of an interstate was in for a shock. A kind of entry hall had been constructed. Its floors were parquet. Its walls were old apothecary shelves lined with leather-bound volumes. There was a vast Oriental rug. There was a Victorian settee. There were prints and old Western broadsides and framed articles that mentioned John H. Jenkins III.

Even beyond the entry hall, the plant had surprises—the sort of wagon that was pulled by an eighteen-mule team, for instance, and a room-size safe that the insurance company had required for the Eberstadt books and, of course, the office of the proprietor. Jerry Conn, a writer and teacher in Austin who knew Jenkins from Beaumont, where they both grew up, says he realized as soon as he entered that office that he was not dealing with the Johnny Jenkins he remembered—"a skinny little weeny kid with glasses." Conn was at the Jenkins Company to discuss the publication as a book of an expanded master's thesis on Preston Smith, widely considered the least colorful Texas governor of modern times until Dolph Briscoe came along. "It's sort of dark back there where you are when you come in," Conn said recently, recalling what it had been like to enter the office. "And you go up to this huge desk. It's like Dorothy and the Scarecrow and them going up to the Wizard of Oz." And there, behind the huge desk, in a massive, magnificently ugly chair that amounted to a menagerie of gargoyles, was Johnny Jenkins.

Jenkins was a small man physically—he may have been five feet six—and his build suggested someone who had spent his childhood collecting coins rather than playing football. His office,



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though, reflected a strong attraction to the outsize scale associated with Texas. To Conn, it was as if Jenkins had consciously adopted a character, and the character was the brash Texas wheeler-dealer. When Jenkins was outside Texas, he was costumed for the role. At a book fair in Chicago or New York or London, he was likely to show up wearing a Stetson and cowboy boots—accoutrements he ordinarily didn't bother with in Austin—and smoking a huge cigar. To some booksellers, the effect was like coming across a toy Texan. People in the trade still remember Jenkins' performance at a New York book fair in the late seventies. He had rented a large suite at the Plaza, and he invited a number of colleagues up for a poker game. There was a big bowl of shrimp—so big that it was said to have cost fifteen hundred dollars. The poker game would not have been particularly high-stakes. Ray Walton, a semi-retired Austin bookdealer who was a longtime friend and admirer of Jenkins, has said, "A poker game to John—what it was was an audience." At the table, Jenkins would sit cross-legged, the way Indians in movies sit around the campfire—a habit that was later cited as an explanation for the name Austin Squatty. In his storytelling mode, he also had a customary pose—hands in his back pockets, cigar rolling around from one side of his mouth to the other. And if someone said that the story being told didn't sound like the precise truth Jenkins might say, "O.K. Let's see hands. How many want a good story and how many want the truth?"

Beaumont, an oil-refining town a few miles from the Louisiana line, is not the sort of Texas place that immediately conjures up cowboy boots, but Jenkins always identified more with Bastrop County, where both sides of his family had come from. In fact, his widow told authorities, he had presumably been in the area of the boat ramp on that Sunday in April searching for a grave marker as part of his research for a book on Edward Burleson, a Bastrop hero of the Texas Revolution—a figure who had interested Jenkins ever since he was a child, when he used to spend his summers among a swarm of grandchildren his mother's parents presided over in Bastrop. "Even then, the thing that was impressive to everybody about him was his intensity," one of his cousins, a minister in Bastrop named Ken Kesselus, has said. "He wanted to excel. He hated to waste time. He wanted to do something with his life. When the other boys were figuring out how to steal watermelons, he was working on a book or starting a coin collection." From the start, Johnny Jenkins, skinny little weeny kid or not, was a go-getter, a self-improver, a mind-stretcher. J. P. Bryan, a second-generation collector of Texana who lives in Houston, met Jenkins when they were both University of Texas students interested in the Texas State Historical Association, and through the years, as a friend and occasional business partner and constant customer, he never lost his amazement at Jenkins' energy. Thinking back on Jenkins recently, Bryan said, "He was one of the few people I've ever known who could sit in a chair and seem to be moving."

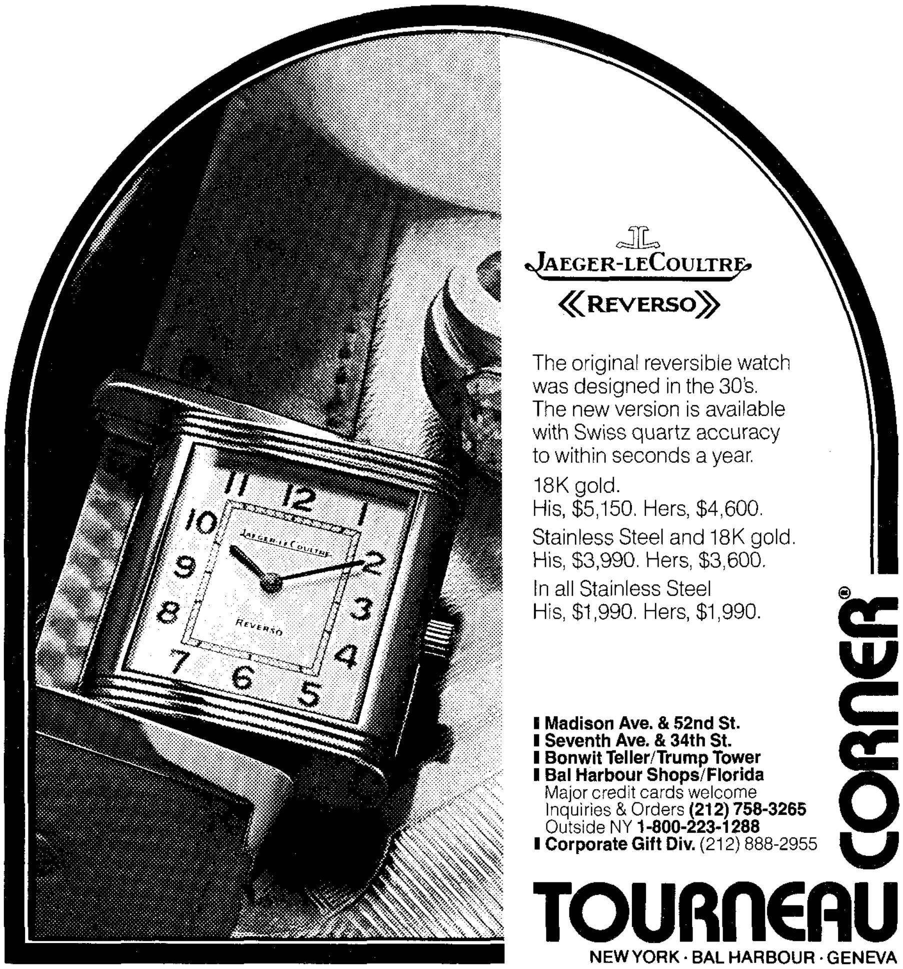
Before Jenkins left the university, he had established a shop in downtown Austin for his coins. He handled some books in the shop, too, and scouted around for books to sell to rare-book dealers. He was, as he had been since childhood, ready to trade anything for anything. Summing up his business career after his death, Maureen Jenkins, his widow, said, "John was basically a horse trader." Trading is a natural extension of the rare-book business; dealers often buy estates and find themselves with any number of items that would look odd on the shelves of a bookstore. In Texas, which has an honored pioneer tradition of haggling and bartering, trading among people who dealt in books and antiques evolved during the sixties into a phenomenon that nearly qualified as a spectator sport. At the center of the game was Dorman David, a dashing young man who had family money and a remarkable eye and a taste for the high life and, fairly regularly, a short-term cash-flow problem. David remembers one trade this way: "One time, I took a mummy to Waco, Texas. It was in a coffin—a sarcophagus of carved wood. That was a big trade. I got Travis letters from the Alamo, probably Bowie knives, and some guns. I may have got a log cabin." In a *Texas Monthly* piece last spring on the Texas forgeries, Gregory Curtis mentions a number of sixties trades, including one in which "Jenkins got a Rolls-Royce, a Kentucky rifle, and a Bowie knife; Price Daniel, Jr., the son of the former governor and a bookdealer before he became a politician, got a book collection; a car dealer who had owned the Rolls got an antique racing car; a restaurant owner got several thousand Cuban cigars; and David got a $20,000 credit at Maxim's in Houston, which he traded for some rare wines, which he in turn traded to Jenkins for books and documents." Memories can be fuzzy on such oral agreements, and one version of that trade includes two tickets to a Dallas Cowboys game.

There is no disagreement about John Jenkins' skill as a trader. He was smart, of course—the sort of person whose friends often described him as having "an I.Q. that's out of sight." There were stories about how he could spell any word or speak five minutes on any historical question. ("You couldn't stump him. If he didn't know it, he could make it up and make it sound like he knew it.") He had a confident way of discussing subjects you wouldn't think he knew anything about. And he had brass. "When he made a deal, he'd want one extra thing," Cookie Baumel, a poker friend who often traded with Jenkins, has said. "If he'd traded you a car dealership, he would have said, right at the end, 'And, oh, I want a car at cost for the next so many years.' He was a good dealer. He knew how to do a deal where everybody felt good about it." Some people, though, see the fabled trading of the sixties as simply a device—one among many—for transferring whatever was accumulated by the tasteful and imaginative Dorman David to the wily John Jenkins. The novelist Larry McMurtry, a Texan who has been involved in the rare-book business all his adult life, sees the relationship that way, and he sees Jenkins as having acquired something more than books and prints and Texas broadsides from Dorman

David: his flamboyance, his dash, his color. In McMurtry's view, "John Jenkins sort of came out from under Dorman David."

Dorman David readily admits that in those days he was a "wild boy"—someone who went from escapades and excesses to a bad heroin habit and, eventually, a jail term. His father, Henry David, was sometimes known as the mud king of Texas—a tough man who had started with nothing and made a fortune in what is known as drilling mud. The David family sounds like the stuff of a Texas novel, and McMurtry, who once worked at the Bookman, the store founded by Dorman David, sometimes sounds as if he might be sketching it out as he speaks. Henry David was apparently not always pleased at the idea of his family's spending his mud money on elegant furnishings and exotic plants and the stock and fixtures of what many considered the single most beautiful bookstore in the country. In McMurtry's recollection of those days in the late sixties, the comings and goings of various family members during domestic storms of one sort or another were so intense that one small moving company in Houston did virtually nothing but move the Davids. Of all the Davids, Dorman cut the widest swath through Texas, leaving a trail of wrecked cars and sunken pleasure craft and splintered marriages. Recently, he recalled that during those years he was married four or five times and involved in a couple of relationships that were in effect marriages. ("I guess I was just following my heart.") Among bookdealers, Dorman David was known as a horse trader who often ended up without any horses—a man who usually paid too much for an item he simply had to have, and then, when pressed, had to sell it or trade it for too little, often to John Jenkins.

For a while, Jenkins and Dorman David were among the partners in an Austin gallery that specialized in Western art. In the early years, Jenkins had J. P. Bryan as a partner in his publishing operations. But the center of Jenkins' commercial life was always the rare-book business. At a certain level, the rare-book business is to a great extent a mail-order business, conducted as often as not with other dealers, and Jenkins gradually built up his catalogues and his stock, concentrating on Texana. He cultivated cus-



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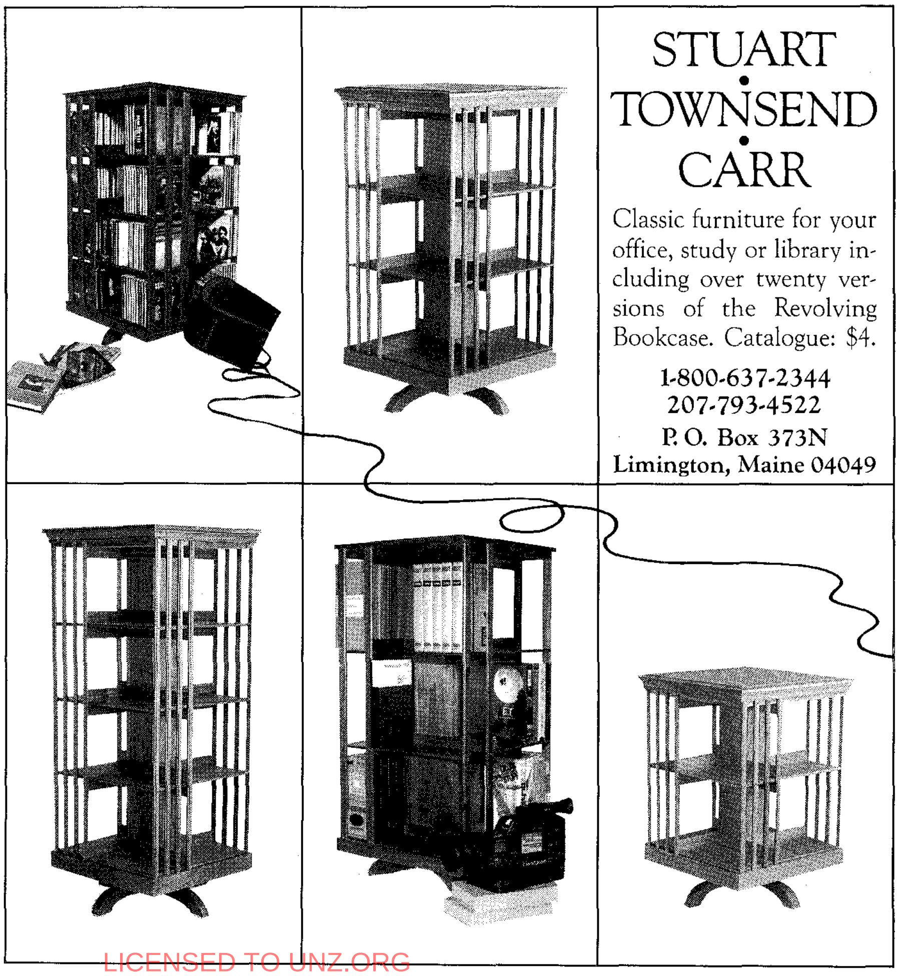

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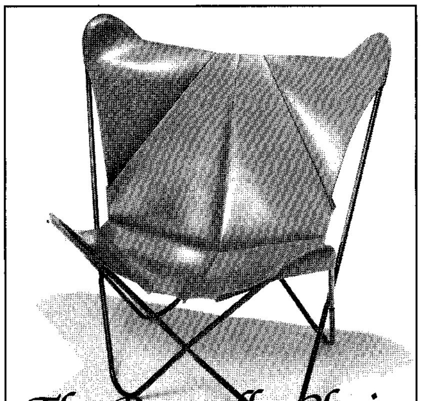

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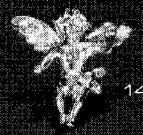

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tomers—often, in his case, institutions. He bought collections and tried to figure out what to do with what couldn't be sold. By all accounts, he loved buying books, and he loved all the more buying books of great size in large lots. "He'd say, 'I'm here to buy some big fat books,' as a sort of joke," Bill Reese, a New Haven specialist in Americana, has said. "But then he really would buy a lot of big fat books." Jenkins often referred to himself as "the world's largest bookdealer." In a business associated with meticulous men carefully examining one item at a time, Jenkins had an abiding interest in quantity; in a business sometimes noted for its quiet politesse, Jenkins, whose closest friends acknowledge that he had "an ego the size of Texas," was interested in making a splash. William Simpson, a Houston auctioneer of antiques who often traded printed material to Jenkins for manuscripts ("Houston is a manuscript town"), normally speaks in the orotund tones and ornate phrases common to his calling, but he once summed up a lot about John Jenkins' behavior in one short sentence: "He needed to be noticed."

Jenkins did not make an immediate splash in the rare-book trade, but he did build his business. Using a computer before many of his colleagues had made the conversion, he churned out a lot of catalogues. In the early years of his business—the years of Democratic Administrations pushing federal aid to education, and of great university expansion to accommodate the baby boom—university libraries all over the country tended to have healthy acquisition budgets for rare books. Among rich Texans there was an increasing interest in acquiring Texana—and there was an increasing supply of rich Texans. When Lowdermilk's, a Washington bookstore noted for its supply of government publications, had a closing sale, in the early seventies, John Jenkins was the big buyer. The huge corrugated building on I-35 began filling up with books. Then, in 1975, Jenkins bought out the Eberstadts. In the words of his old friend J. P. Bryan, "The reflected glory of that transaction put him in a different atmosphere."

WHAT is usually spoken of as the Eberstadt Collection was not, in reality, a collection but simply the inventory of Charles and Lindley Eberstadt, brothers who, succeeding their father, had become the country's preeminent dealers in Americana—the only dealers certain wealthy collectors and rare-book libraries would buy from. As they grew older, the Eberstadt brothers had begun a gradual slide from hard-to-deal-with to semi-retired, and by 1969 they had moved what remained of their stock from premises on Madison Avenue to Montclair, New Jersey. By the time Charles Eberstadt died, in 1974, it had been so long since anybody had been given a good look at the inventory that no Americana dealer could claim to have a reliable notion of what was in it. Jenkins had cultivated Lindley Eberstadt for years. When it appeared that Lindley was prepared to sell out, for a variety of tax and estate reasons, Jenkins, putting together financing from an old Texas friend and some Wall Street investment bankers, managed to buy the Eberstadt stock for what was probably around two million seven hundred thousand dollars—a staggering sum in the rare-book trade in 1975. The purchase consisted of forty thousand items, some of them one-of-a-kind books or pamphlets whose existence dealers had not been aware of. According to Michael Ginsberg, a Massachusetts bookdealer who was present for some of the negotiations, "Johnny said, 'Until 1975, Eberstadt was the market. Now I'm the market. Now everybody has to come to Texas.' " With Ginsberg's help, Jenkins had the booty loaded into a rental truck and hauled to the corrugated-aluminum building on I-35.

The Texana had been spoken for by the University of Texas—in fact, U.T.'s agreement in advance to buy that part of the stock, for what turned out to be about a million and a half dollars, was one of the elements that had made the deal possible—but the rest of the books were for sale almost as soon as they were out of the trucks. Dealers, two or three at a time, came to Austin from all over the country. They would wander through the books, make a pile of what interested them, as they might at the annual used-book sale to benefit the scholarship fund, and then have the books priced by Jenkins or Mike Ginsberg. Jenkins tended to have the dealers met at the Austin airport, sometimes by a Cadillac—this was Texas, after all—and he entertained them at lavish dinners. He said that bringing the Eberstadt books to Texas was part of a cultural shift toward Texas which he had always dreamed about. Several years later, he explained to a newspaper in Beaumont that the dominant role played in American cultural life by Philadelphia in the eighteenth century and Boston in the nineteenth and New York in the twentieth would be played by Texas in the twenty-first.

Oddly, nobody is certain how well Jenkins came out on the Eberstadt books. There is no question that, profit aside, the coup of the purchase provided the splash that made him a major figure in the rare-book business. From 1975 to around 1982, the period that is generally accepted in the trade as John Jenkins' heyday, the Jenkins Company was a professionally staffed operation that did a few million dollars' worth of business a year, partly on the momentum or the actual books of the Eberstadt purchase. But whether the Jenkins Company in fact made a substantial profit from those forty thousand items is a different matter. Jenkins, pricing piles of books in those first weeks after the purchase, told everyone that the pressure he faced was seven hundred dollars a day in interest charges. Some bookdealers believe, though, that once he had nailed down the University of Texas payment to cover a good part of the loan he could have stopped for a while to make a more systematic study of what his stock was worth. ("I don't think anybody knew Texana better than Johnny," one dealer has said, "but outside Texana he was shooting in the dark.") On the other hand, they tend to acknowledge that the man who had the prudence to do that would probably not be the man who had the brass to grab the Eberstadt books in the first place. John Jenkins loved to sell books even more than he loved to buy them. "Whenever John had something good, he had a fever in his brain to turn it over," Bill Reese has said. "If you got there when he was trying to get his nut back, you could get some tremendous deals. He was in a fever to turn that Eberstadt stuff."

Jenkins often offered reporters an estimate of what the Eberstadt stock was "worth"—a word that bookdealers tend to treat with the sort of suspicion they might direct at a browser who seems to be lingering for a long time next to the first editions and is carrying a voluminous shopping bag. But the figure was constantly changing, and, as it happened, nobody in the book business, friend or foe, took figures tossed out by John Jenkins very seriously anyway. When Jenkins, a man enamored of sheer quantity, told a reporter how many books the Jenkins Company owned or how much they were worth, one Austin bookdealer has said, the safe course was always to take the square root of the number mentioned. The numbers—the number of trucks that had been required to bring the books he bought from Lowdermilk's back from Washington, say, or the number of pre-1835 newspapers he had in stock—invariably grew larger, because everything about a Jenkins exploit grew in the retelling. (Even the first version could be of a size not immediately recognizable to those who had been at the scene. Larry McMurtry insists that he picked up a Texas newspaper after the most serious fire at the Jenkins Company, on Christmas Eve of 1985, and saw the

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headline “RARE BOOK LOSS TERMED GLOBAL DISASTER.”) Over the years, colleagues watched the story of how Jenkins turned in the Audubon-folio thieves swell from a fairly straightforward bust after a meeting at a motel—an incident already interesting enough to have drawn an inquiry from the producers of the “Kojak” show—to a bullet-sprayed, blood-spattered adventure so gripping that it was in fact the basis for an episode of “Kojak.” When Jenkins wrote a sort of memoir called “Audubon and Other Capers,” his inscription in a copy for Kenneth Rendell, a prominent autograph dealer he had known for years, said, “The whole truth, and nothing but the truth—as I remember it.”

In the words of a bookdealer who didn’t like him, Jenkins was “indifferent to the truth.” Those who did like him—people like his old friend Ray Walton—would not say that he was indifferent to it, but they would acknowledge that he never claimed to prefer it to a good story. Walton, for one, never saw anything sinister in that. “No matter what coup, no matter what recognition he got, it wouldn’t be enough recognition unless he made it a little bigger,” Walton said recently. “John learned at an early age that most reporters are lazy and gullible and wrote down anything he told them. So gradually he began stretching. I think he got the Eberstadt books up to twenty million dollars at some point. But most of those enhancements were harmless. He didn’t use them to swindle people. He was just feeding his ego. It was all a hilarious game to him. It was almost that he felt like it was his duty to make it a little more entertaining.”

Exaggeration was natural to the character of a brash Texan who did things in a big way. Some people in the trade were offended by the character and by Jenkins’ single-mindedness in trying to create it. “I thought he was a caricature of himself,” a Texan who used to work at the University of Texas library said not long ago, recalling her embarrassment when the Grolier Club, an organization of New York bibliophiles, took a tour of Texas and Jenkins forced the bus driver to make a detour so he could show everyone his grand house. “Everything he did, from getting a book or catching the Audubon thieves, he milked so relentlessly,” she said. “The image of who he was became all-consuming.” People who admired John Jenkins and people who didn’t admire him agree that he was, in effect, a self-legendizer. “His image in the public—he lived for that,” Dorman David said shortly after Jenkins died. “For him to be ‘a fabulous person’ was more important than anything else to him.”

Admirers and detractors also had differing interpretations of the same facts when it came to the way Jenkins ran his business. There is no doubt that, compared with other bookdealers of his prominence, Jenkins sold through his catalogue a significant percentage of books that were what bookmen call “not as described.” Rare-book dealers use the word “collating” to mean going through a book page by page when it arrives to make certain that it is complete, and, in the words of one Austin dealer, “you never collated a book from John Jenkins only once.” Jenkins once bought what is called the hospital of an English bookstore—the collection of hurt and incomplete books that is kept partly as what amounts to a repository of spare parts—and some of the incomplete books apparently found their way into Jenkins Company catalogues without a full accounting of quite how incomplete they were. In most catalogues, the abbreviation “fxd” means that a book is foxed—that it bears brownish stains caused by oxidation. In a Jenkins catalogue, it meant “foxed, general wear,” and someone not familiar with the Jenkins usage could find himself with a book in need of hospitalization. “His shortcomings as a rare bookseller were well known, and by and large discounted by his colleagues,” Ed Maggs, who worked briefly for the Jenkins Company, wrote in a sympathetic obituary of Jenkins. “It was once suggested that his catalogues should bear the legend that all books should be considered defective unless otherwise stated.” Whether the surprising condition of many of the books sent out by the Jenkins Company was the result of carelessness or of deceit depended on what the recipient thought of the proprietor. There were people in the trade who believed that Jenkins had the sort of business practices that “might do in the coin business,” or even that he was a simple crook. Some other people thought that Jenkins was merely, as one of his friends put it, “not one for details.” Those holding either view agree that Jenkins’ response to having an incomplete or damaged book returned was to refund the purchase price cheerfully and perhaps make a joke or two about it.

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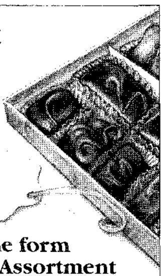

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J. P. Bryan, some of Jenkins' sloppiness about business matters came from impatience. "He did everything as if he was off to catch the subway," Bryan has said. At times, though, he put in hours at a stretch cataloguing books—a lonely and exacting task—and his bitterest enemies acknowledge that "Basic Texas Books" is an impressive piece of research that will probably be the standard bibliography of Texana for the foreseeable future. Even at that, though, he was impatient. He sent the galleys to New Haven to be read by Bill Reese and Terry Halladay, who now works with Reese but used to be at the Jenkins Company. The two of them went over the galleys carefully and sent them back with any number of comments—not only stylistic suggestions but factual corrections. Jenkins sent them an effusive note thanking them for their trouble, but the book contained none of their corrections. Reese thought it was typical Jenkins: "He really wanted to be right, but he was probably in a hurry to get it out."

"THE funds are here, and where you find money you eventually find culture also," Jenkins told the Houston *Chronicle* at the time of the Eberstadt purchase. He said that the oil-and-gas wealth of Texas was "apparently permanent wealth," and went on, "Everything seems to be dead or dying in the East, but it is just beginning here." As things turned out, of course, Texas oil-and-gas wealth was not even semi-permanent. Seven or eight years after the Eberstadt purchase, the entire state seemed to be going broke. At around the same time, the best years of the Jenkins Company were coming to an end, and there are people in the trade who would say that one phenomenon explains the other—that John Jenkins just rode up and down on the Texas economy. Jenkins, that theory goes, began to prosper when the Texas boom was creating a new generation of rich Texana collectors and when the Humanities Research Center, the principal rare-book repository at the University of Texas, was a "bibliovacuum-cleaner," buying so many books every year that there wasn't time to confirm the presence of all the pages. It's true that Jenkins sold fairly regularly to the Humanities Research Center in the seventies, even though its collection consists of literature rather than Texana or Ameri-

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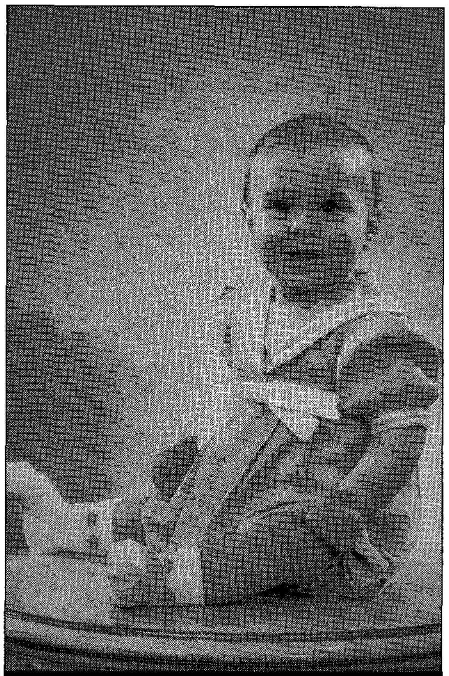

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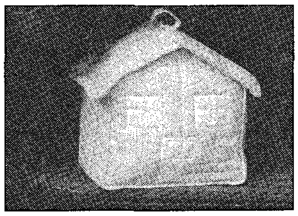

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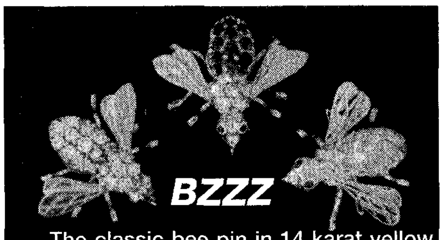

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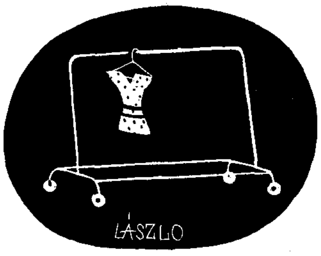
cana, but he was not one of its major sources. It's also true that there were some Texans who went from being collectors in the boom to dodging collection agencies in the bust, and that acquisition budgets of large university libraries across the country tended to decline in the eighties. But the rare-book business at the level Jenkins was engaged in it had become a national, or even international, business long ago; an operation the size of the Jenkins Company could not have prospered or failed on the basis of Texas buyers alone.



There was a central element of the Jenkins Company's business that did depend on the condition of the Texas economy—credit. It took some years for Texas bookmen to convince Texas bankers that rare books should be acceptable as collateral. Some of Jenkins' colleagues thought that the Jenkins Company kept its entrance hall lined with so many handsomely bound sets—the rich-looking but not particularly valuable editions that book people call "leather" or "furniture"—to impress bankers who could never have been persuaded that the real money was in some faded pamphlet. When banks finally did begin lending money on books, John Jenkins, a renowned juggler of loans, apparently passed up few opportunities to borrow. During the boom days, banks seemed to open at about the same rate as shopping centers, and, in the recollection of someone who worked at the Jenkins Company in those years, "every time a bank opened, Johnny went down and took out a loan." That sort of financing ended abruptly when banks in Texas began to fail in large numbers. These days, an Austin businessman who goes down to his local bank in search of a loan is less likely to encounter the old acquaintance with whom he last talked at the Kiwanis barbecue than a rather remote administrator for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation who has been too busy calling in overdue notes to attend such gatherings. It is said in Austin that what a Texas bank now wants to see as collateral for a hundred-thousand-dollar loan is a hundred-thousand-dollar certificate of deposit right there in the same bank.

Nobody claimed that John Jenkins—a man who sometimes seemed to crave action more than profit—was a careful businessman. "The one thing Johnny could never get through his head was the economics of the business—the price of cataloguing books and housing books, for instance," his friend Mike Ginsberg has said. "He thought if you bought a book for fifty dollars and sold it for two hundred you made a hundred and fifty dollars." And nobody claimed that Jenkins was a man determined to live within his means. Still, a lot of people in the trade say that he would have done just fine, even in a soft economy, if he had only been able to stick to the book business. "If Johnny had wanted to focus his full attention on the book business, he would have been the greatest bookdealer in the United States," J. P. Bryan said recently. "It wasn't lack of talent. It was lack of focus." It may be true that what finally crippled Jenkins financially was the drain of his outside disasters at a time when he didn't have the stock or the credit or the focus to recoup his loss in the book business. In a way, though, saying that John Jenkins should have confined himself to a business he had mastered is like saying that he should have been more painstaking in the way he priced and sold the Eberstadt books: it's true, but it's almost the equivalent of saying that he should have been a different person. People who knew Jenkins always speak about his enormous energy, his need for challenges, his almost desperate need to be noticed; some of them say that after the jolt of the Eberstadt sale subsided, in the early eighties, Jenkins seemed bored by the book business. Not long ago, someone who had known Jenkins in Austin outside the book trade said that he might have found himself better suited to the life led in the Texas pioneer era that so fascinated him: what with trying to get some land cleared and a house built while holding off the Indians and putting in some crops, he might have used up all that energy. Living in more modern times, he was always looking for something.

His friends saw poker as simply another outlet for Jenkins' energy and his need for challenge—or, as one of them put it, "an opportunity to show that he was smarter than everyone else." His detractors saw it as compulsive gambling. When he began going to Las Vegas, it was as a blackjack player. He had taken a course in card counting—he had a head for numbers and, like most bookmen, a first-rate memory—and, according to some of the people who used to accompany him to Vegas in those days, he got good enough at keeping track of the cards to be banned at some casinos. Jenkins had been playing poker since he was a boy in Beaumont, and he had presided over a weekly game in Austin for years. In the late seventies, the weekly game gradually became more serious and more expensive. Jenkins began devouring books on poker. He began playing in some out-of-town games, and he started competing in Las Vegas. He won several trophies, which he displayed at his house; he acquired a flashy jacket, emblazoned with "Austin Squatty," which he seemed to take particular pleasure in wearing at rare-book events. He may also have lost a lot of money. There are people who think that Jenkins was draining money from his business years ago to pay gambling losses, but there are also people who remember his saying years ago that he had saved his business more than once through poker playing. His friends don't claim to know the truth. "When Johnny came back from Las Vegas, he always said he'd won," one of them has recalled. "But he would have said that anyway."

In the mid-eighties, Jenkins was still as likely as ever to show up in a magazine spread describing himself as the largest antiquarian bookdealer in the world, but the gap between the numbers he tossed off and reality was steadily increasing. As the years wore on, he became less and less a factor in the rare-book business. Most of the professional staff that he had built up after the Eberstadt sale drifted away. The catalogues, which had once come pouring out of the computer in Austin, came out less often and seemed to list a lot of books that had been in the previous catalogues. Dealers who dropped in to see what Jenkins happened to have on hand had increasing difficulty finding books to buy from the Jenkins Company. In the late eighties, an Austin bookdealer has said, Jenkins seemed to be getting to the point at which the best way to describe his position in the book trade was with the old

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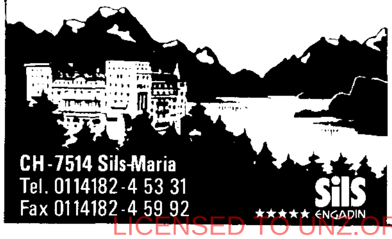
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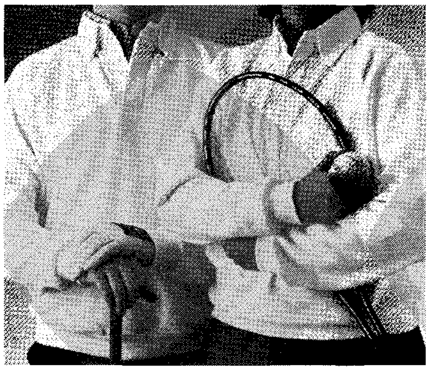

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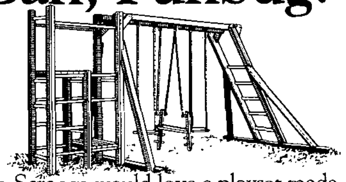

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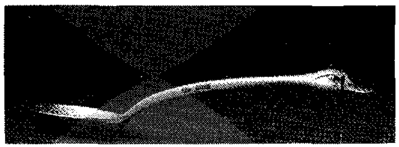

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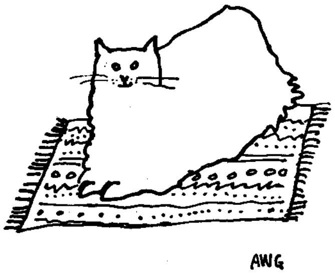
Texas phrase "all hat and no cattle."

Whether the fire that destroyed a good deal of the plant on Christmas Eve of 1985 was a serious blow to the fortunes of the Jenkins Company as well as a global disaster or whether it was—as some cynics in the trade would maintain—a short-term solution to some of John Jenkins' cash-flow problems is still the stuff of late-night conversations at book fairs. "It cut the legs right out from under us," Michael Parrish, the manager of the Jenkins Company, has said, maintaining that the insurance settlement, of three and a half million dollars, went basically for bank notes and that a number of valuable books were outside the fireproof room that had been installed for the Eberstadt stock. Other people in the book trade have described what was lost that Christmas Eve as "a bunch of remainders" or have described the fire as "the best sale Johnny ever had." The Christmas Eve fire was ruled accidental, but a fire in September of 1987 at the building that Jenkins was using during the rebuilding of the plant was ruled arson—with no conclusion reached as to who had committed the arson. The settlement paid to Jenkins for the Christmas Eve fire, also known as "the big fire," had a terrible effect on the premiums of other bookdealers. And, in an industry that had previously experienced fires so rarely that some dealers couldn't think of one offhand, the fact that John Jenkins had enough fires to require identifying subtitles for them had a terrible effect on his reputation.



One bookseller who had particular reason to be disenchanted by the 1987 fire was Jennifer Larson, of San Francisco, who was hired by Jenkins' insurance carrier to make an appraisal of the Jenkins Company stock. She arrived in Austin thinking of John Jenkins as one of the leaders of the business ("in Western Americana No. 1, without question"), but she came to believe that some of the items she was judging "could be demonstrated to be not genuine." In looking around for counsel, she found that Tom Taylor, an Austin bookseller and printer, was already involved in a painstaking investigation of Texas forgeries. Taylor's research had begun when he was told about a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence by a printer who suspected its authenticity. The conversation made him focus on a thought he had never really permitted to come to the surface of his mind: that some important documents of the Texas Republic period, including original copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence, seemed to be a lot more common than they had once been. "Every time I walked into a library, another one seemed to pop up," Taylor said. "You have the feeling in the pit of your stomach that something is wrong."

Taylor began tracking them down, looking for their provenance, and subjecting them to scrutiny. What he found was astounding simply in numbers alone. Until 1973, for instance, there had been two known copies of a broadside printed from the "Victory or Death" letter that William Travis wrote at the Alamo; Taylor tracked down twelve more. Over roughly the same time span, extant copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence had gone from five to twenty-one. The copies that had not been around before the seventies, Taylor's examinations showed, were fakes. He found fakes in many of the most distinguished rare-book libraries of Texas; he found that a Texas Declaration of Independence owned by Governor Bill Clements was a fake. Of the thirty-six fake documents whose provenance he could trace with certainty, Taylor later wrote, the ownership trail of all of them ended at one of three places. Five had been sold by Dorman David, nine by William Simpson, the antiques auctioneer in Houston, and twenty-two by the Jenkins Company—"including at least 6 copies of the Travis letter and 4 copies of the Declaration of Independence." None of the questionable documents sold by the Jenkins Company had been sold publicly, through a catalogue—a fact that some people in the trade found even more suspicious than the sheer number of documents involved. Jennifer Larson has said, "You'd think that if a man like John Jenkins had a document like that he'd put it on his Christmas card."

Dorman David acknowledges that he made the plates that were presumably used for at least some of the forg-

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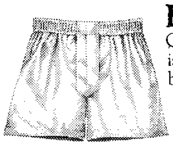

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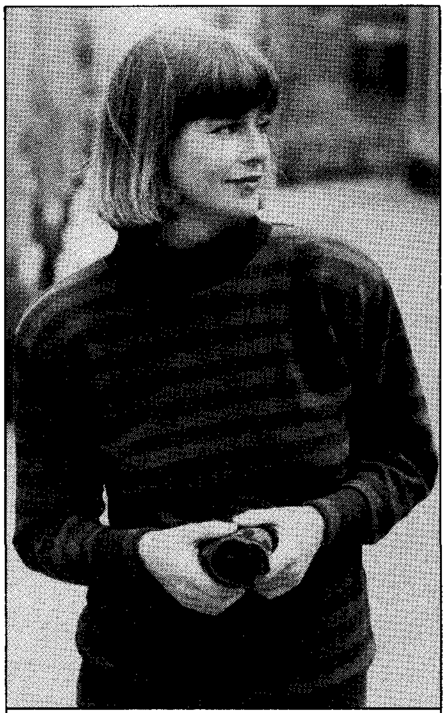
eries. His intention, he has said, was to do a folio of facsimiles of important documents having to do with the settlement of Texas. He says that the plates were in some boxes of material he sold Jenkins and Simpson when, broke and hooked on heroin, he finally got out of the book business forever, in the early seventies. Jenkins and Simpson both denied that they had acquired any plates or forgeries from David. Simpson, who had always dealt in rare books and documents simply as supplementary lots in auctions dominated by ornate European furniture ("You want everything on the menu"), said he had acquired most of the questionable documents he sold from Jenkins—a position that lent a certain symmetry to the inquiry, since Jenkins said that many of his were from Simpson. In a letter circulated to Texas booksellers last fall Jenkins said of David, "I have no accusations to make against him and personally believe that whatever misbehavior if any he was ever engaged in, he paid the price with the loss of his business and reputation, the frying of his brain and loss of his health, and with serving a term in jail." Jenkins pointed out that virtually every rare-book dealer in Texas had sold one of the fake documents at one time or another; Taylor himself had sold four. It was no wonder that the Jenkins Company handled more of such documents than anyone else, he wrote in his letter, since "during the past two decades, the Jenkins Company has been by far the largest dealer in Texana, our sales being in excess of $30 million dollars in books during that period."

There are people who think that John Jenkins was by nature so optimistic that he could have sold four copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence without wondering why there were suddenly so many, but those people are a minority. Jenkins was after all the country's leading authority on Texana—not to speak of being the security officer of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. Among the theories spun out by book people about the forgeries, the best case normally put forward for Jenkins is that, like a number of other dealers who were making a good profit on Texas documents, he had what Tom Taylor once referred to as "a need not to know." The worst case is that he found a stack of documents in the material he had bought from Dorman



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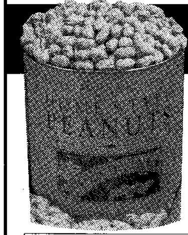

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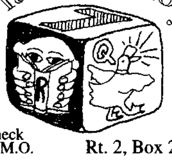

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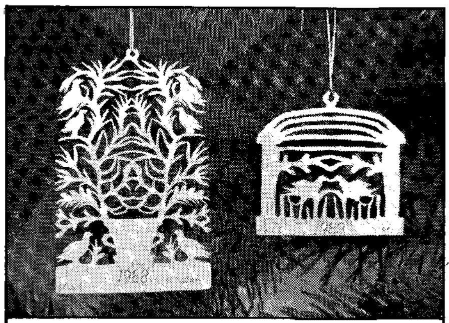

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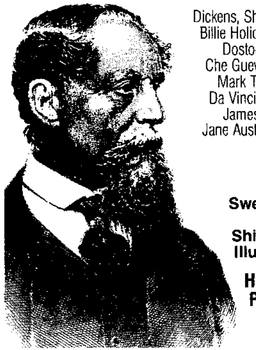

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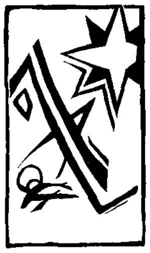

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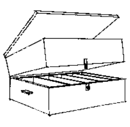

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David, or was actually involved in creating the fakes. The truth would probably not have emerged even if Jenkins had lived. Questions of who knew what when are not easily answered beyond a reasonable doubt, and, once some passes at restitution had been made, the institutions involved were not inclined to pursue the matter. No criminal indictments were brought. The A.B.A.A. did rather abruptly organize a security committee to replace its security officer, and after some prodding by a few members it established a questioned-imprints committee to make a sort of inventory of forged documents and turn it over to the ethics committee. But this spring, a year after Taylor's findings first made news in Texas, the ethics committee had just received the inventory and was beginning its inquiry into whether any A.B.A.A. member had knowingly sold a forgery or had not given proper restitution when something he sold turned out to be a forgery. Meanwhile, one Austin bookdealer said recently, "Johnny was left to the rumor mill." In the book trade, a small community whose members are in constant contact, the rumor mill has always had a high rate of productivity. The people in the book business who hadn't had much use for Jenkins to begin with—people who were offended by his manner or suspicious of his business methods or, close friends of his would say, envious of his flashy and much publicized leap to the top of the field—saw both the 1987 fire and the forgery scandal as confirming what they had been saying about him all along.

By this spring, Jenkins found himself wounded by rumors and beset by financial troubles that were quite concrete. He was being sued by the F.D.I.C. for a million-three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan obtained in connection with the drilling-rig operation. Because of his failure to keep up payments on a six-hundred-thousand-dollar loan, an Austin bank had given notice that it would foreclose on the I-35 building, and a date had been set for an auction on the steps of the Travis County courthouse. "He tended to think he could overcome problems," J. P. Bryan has said of Jenkins. "But I will say that he had overwhelming problems." He had apparently told some close friends that he might have to start over again, but, they say, he gave no indication that the prospect of

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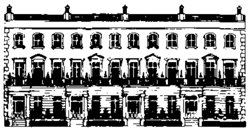

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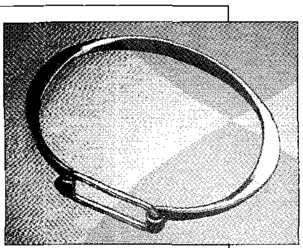

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doing that had put much of a dent in his native optimism. In fact, those close to Jenkins insist that he was in a particularly jovial mood on that Sunday in April. His cousin Ken Kesselus was his collaborator on the book about Edward Burleson, and he has said that Jenkins was "like a kid" at the prospect of finishing up the revisions and publishing a biography of a historical character who had interested him since his childhood. According to Kesselus, Jenkins, the sort of historian who likes to pace up and down the field where the battle took place, had reason to believe that he finally knew where Burleson's father was buried, and was itching to drive out to Bastrop and have a look.

IN those first days after Robert Donnell's discovery at the boat ramp in Bastrop County, the circumstances of John Jenkins' life led naturally to speculation about the circumstances of his death. There were people who assumed that Jenkins had been trailed to Bastrop County and murdered because of something having to do with gambling—murdered by mobsters because of a gambling debt, perhaps, or by a gambler he had caught cheating. There were people who thought that he had been the victim of random violence at the hands of thugs who had been attracted by the roll of bills and the Rolex watch he customarily had on his person. There were people who figured that the thieves caught in the Audubon heist might have finally got out of prison and taken their revenge. There were even people who thought that Jenkins might have been killed because of something having to do with the Texas forgeries, although nobody could think of quite what. There were also people who believed that John Jenkins had committed suicide. Foremost among them was Con Keirsey, the sheriff of Bastrop County.

Although Sheriff Keirsey is a former Austin homicide detective, he fits the popular picture of a rural Texas sheriff. He wears a proper sheriff's outfit: a hand-tooled leather belt with "Con" imprinted on the back and a buckle with a bull on it fastened on the front; cowboy boots; Western-cut pants; a Western shirt with pearl buttons; a straw hat in the traditional Stetson cut; and a star. He looks something like a larger, thicker version of Audie Murphy, and he talks the way Murphy talked, in one of those slow Southwestern accents that make the speaker sound as if he's having trouble getting his mouth completely around the words. He even says the same sort of things Audie Murphy might say if he were playing a sheriff, like "I've been doing this for thirty years. I might not be the best at it, but I know a little." Sheriff Keirsey acknowledged that at first glance it appeared that John Jenkins had been murdered. His money and his credit cards were missing, and so was his Rolex—a President model, which is said to be so popular among gamblers in Las Vegas that it has an established price in any pawnshop. No note had been left. Jenkins had been shot in the back of the head—an unusual place for someone who wanted to do himself in to aim. Most important, the sheriff had been unable to find the gun, even though more shoreline had been exposed by holding the river at a hydropower station upstream and divers, using metal detectors and a powerful magnet borrowed from a nearby Air Force base, had pulled from the water an assortment of objects that included hand tools and silverware and auto parts and golf clubs and the keys to Jenkins' Mercedes and, astonishingly, someone else's Rolex.

There were, in other words, any number of reasons to conclude that Jenkins had been murdered. But the sheriff said that it was all too pat. To him the crime scene and the bullet trajectory and the multitude of problems that had beset Jenkins all pointed away from murder. According to Kesselus, Sheriff Keirsey was inclined to view Jenkins' death as a suicide the day the body was found, and that inclination was apparently strengthened when, only a few days later, the sheriff spoke to some people who said they had been present when Jenkins discussed, hypothetically, ways in which it might be possible to rig a suicide to make it appear to be murder—a discussion that concentrated on methods of separating the gun from the body. For whatever reason, Sheriff Keirsey seemed to be taking the position, early in the investigation, that Jenkins had killed himself in a way designed to make his death look like a homicide.

Jenkins' family and his closest friends were outraged by the sheriff's theory. They disagreed with his reading of the physical evidence, and they disagreed with his analysis of the problems that Jenkins was facing. Jenkins

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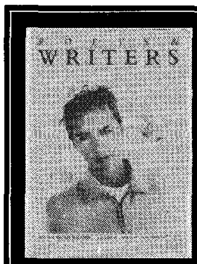

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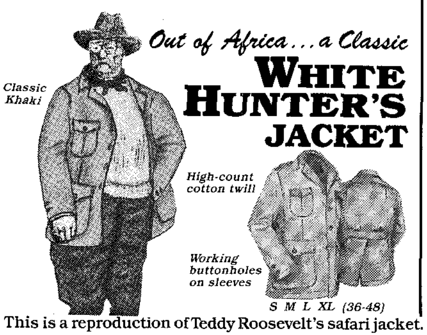
was certainly in a spot, his friends say, but think of how many spots he had been in before. He was known as a man who somehow always managed to land on his feet. Financial problems just as bad were facing a lot of people in Austin who did not necessarily have Jenkins' resilience. The bankruptcy rate among the top ten developers in Austin, for instance, now stands at a hundred per cent. "Johnny had plenty of company," Ray Walton told the *American-Statesman.* "If all the people who got foreclosed on in Austin killed themselves, the corpses would be piled up like cordwood." Jenkins' lawyer insisted that there was no financial incentive for Jenkins to fake a murder—no suicide clause or double-indemnity clause in his insurance policies, for instance. J. P. Bryan has said that he and other friends of Jenkins' had been meeting with some success in trying to restructure some of his outstanding loans; according to Bryan, Jenkins had to know that even if he did want to take his own life his family would be better off if he waited a matter of weeks. "If he did commit suicide, he showed damned poor timing," Bryan said recently. But the people who felt closest to Jenkins thought that he wouldn't commit suicide no matter how bad a spot he found himself in. "If that sheriff had been in a room for one minute with Johnny Jenkins, he'd know he's been barking up the wrong tree," Michael Parrish, the manager of the Jenkins Company, said not long after the sheriff's inclination to call Jenkins' death a suicide became public. "He'd know about the force of his personality, his confidence, his assurance to himself and to those around him that any problem could be overcome. What it gets down to is that the sheriff didn't know Johnny Jenkins."

And if Jenkins did shoot himself, his friends asked, why didn't his hand show evidence of gunpowder? And where was the gun? In fact, there were soon some theories about that circulating in Austin. The most popular was the plastic-Coke-bottle theory. If someone who wanted to make a suicide look like a murder attached the gun to a large plastic Coke bottle with holes in it, the theorists said, he would fall where he was shot but the gun would drift down the river until the bottle finally filled with water and sank. There was a kind of nutty offshoot of the Coke-bottle theory whose name



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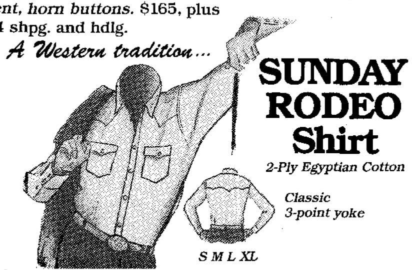

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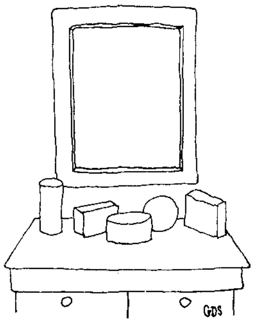
describes it: the helium-balloon theory. Without endorsing either of those theories, Sheriff Keirsey said that finding the gun would not be essential to concluding that Jenkins had committed suicide. He has since said that the gun is probably still in the river, around where Jenkins' body was found. "Just because we haven't found it doesn't mean it isn't there," he said, pointing out that when he was on the homicide squad in Austin the police often failed to recover a gun from the Colorado River even after being told precisely where it had been thrown in.



The sheriff didn't put much stock in the fact that the test for Jenkins' having fired a gun came up negative. He has said that the results could have been caused by the body's having been in the river for a couple of hours, and forensic specialists agree that, even aside from the effects of the Colorado's current, a negative test is not proof that the person tested did not fire a gun. The sheriff was never impressed by either of the two most widespread notions of why Jenkins might have been murdered. A robber, Sheriff Keirsey has said, would probably have turned the wallet inside out and rifled the car and given more evidence of having been at the scene. The notion that Jenkins had been killed by Las Vegas mobsters over a gambling debt made no sense to the sheriff. "If you seem to be welshing on a gambling debt, the first thing they want to do is to put some hurt on you—break your legs, smash up your face, do some odds and ends," he has said. "If they do have to kill you, they'd make it obvious, to leave a message." From his investigations, the sheriff came to believe that John Jenkins was facing a financial crisis far beyond whatever money problems he had managed to deal with in the past. He also came to believe that Jenkins was facing the prospect of being expelled from the A.B.A.A. because of the forgery scandal and the prospect of being indicted for setting the 1987 fire. (The sheriff is mistaken about the A.B.A.A. expulsion. The chairman of the ethics committee had asked Jenkins, in a telephone conversation, to write him a letter giving some details about the provenance of some documents—the committee was particularly concerned about indications that one document might have been resold by the Jenkins Company after it was returned as inauthentic—but that was many steps away from any thought of expulsion. The state fire marshal's office will say only that the investigation of the 1987 fire was still going on and that Jenkins had not been eliminated as a suspect.) The insistence of Jenkins' friends that he was simply not the sort of person who would commit suicide did not persuade Sheriff Keirsey. He came to believe that Jenkins was just the sort of person who, if he decided to commit suicide, would make it appear to be murder. "He wouldn't be the typical suicide profile," the sheriff said recently, after pointing out the various problems that had piled up on Jenkins. "He was a superegotistical guy and a superintelligent guy. They're not going to go out here and tell you they give up. But his esteem and his prestige and his status had diminished in the last year or so, and he couldn't live with the stigma of defeat. His family says he was always able to pull out, but pretty soon you use your coupons up."

The county official whose responsibility it was to decide officially how John Jenkins met his death—a justice of the peace named B.T. Henderson—did not come to the same conclusion. Henderson also has a law-enforcement background, and he's proud of it. "I'm an old-time peace officer myself," he said recently. "My father was killed as a peace officer. My grandfather was a peace officer. When the sheriff was a cadet at the police academy in Austin, I was the chief of police of Ingleside, Texas, down near Corpus Christi." Explaining the decision he came to, Henderson said, "I went by the evidence at the scene and the autopsy. The sheriff was going on assumptions—halfhearted stories told to him by people who wouldn't swear to them and wouldn't testify to them in court. He was using a lot of what-ifs." When it was up to him to rule officially about what had happened at the boat ramp, Henderson said, "It's my official ruling that Mr. John Holmes Jenkins III came to his death at the hands of a person or persons unknown."

To some extent, whether people agree with the conclusions of the sher-

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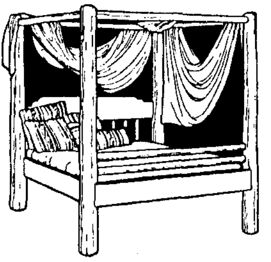

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iff or those of the justice of the peace depends on what they thought of John Jenkins when he was alive. His friends tend to find it difficult to believe that a man whose brains and confidence and resourcefulness they so admired simply gave up. Some people who didn't like Jenkins find it easy to believe that a man whose profligate ways and shady practices finally caught up with him shot himself rather than face the music. Jenkins' friends say that the sheriff would rather assume that Jenkins committed suicide than look for a murderer. The sheriff says that Jenkins simply didn't live the sort of life his family would like to think he did. Since the first week or so after the body was discovered, there hasn't been any significant evidence to bolster the argument of either side. After the justice of the peace handed down his ruling, he said, "Whether the sheriff pursues it is his business," and Michael Parrish said recently of the sheriff, "Since he's not very interested in finding a murderer, he's not going to waste much time on it." Both in Austin and in Bastrop County, there's a feeling that there may never be much more known about what happened to John Jenkins at the boat ramp that Sunday.

DORMAN DAVID now lives quietly in Pass Christian, Mississippi, with his wife and a couple of kids, and makes sculpture. He says that he is finally off drugs and drink, and that he has pretty much run out of mud money. At fifty-one, he's a large, amiable man—a former amateur heavyweight boxer who has put on a few pounds since his fighting days. David, understandably, is not fond of the notion that he was John Jenkins' patsy. "There were no bad trades with Jenkins," he said not long ago. "He didn't win at trades with me, and he didn't win at poker with me." According to David, Jenkins was not even a spectacular poker player in those days. "He was up and coming, but he was always overplaying his hand," David said. "It was his ego problem, which is the only reason you lose at poker or anything else. The ego problem is all there is to deal with in life. First you have to be able to see it, and then you have to be able to deal with it." After David finally stumbled out of the book business, in the early seventies, he saw neither Jenkins nor William Simpson. Although Simpson is semi-retired

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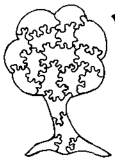

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these days, he can often be found at the same Houston auction gallery, which his son now runs. Not long ago, he told a visitor that the gallery doesn't use historical documents much these days to vary the menu of its auctions, having turned more toward the autographs of entertainers ("dead entertainers, not live entertainers—people who can't get their little fingers around a pencil"). He expressed great sadness about the death of John Jenkins. "The truth is," Simpson said, "that he was a very complex person, not a simple man."

The Jenkins estate has had difficulty collecting on one life-insurance policy, for reasons that are unconnected with the way Jenkins died, but the policies that lenders held on Jenkins' life have freed the company from the constant pressure of debt for the first time in its history. "Ironically, this has made them solvent," an old acquaintance of Jenkins' said recently. The plant—the building that was due to be auctioned off for debt on the steps of the Travis County Courthouse—is now owned outright by the Jenkins Company. The company seems to be more of a presence in the book business than it was in the last few years of John Jenkins' life. Since last April, it has put out three catalogues. Those who tend to tie the rise and fall of John Jenkins to the Texas economy point out that this is not a great time for a debt-ridden high roller to be operating in Texas. They say that, sad as it may be to contemplate, the Jenkins Company is better off with John Jenkins' insurance money than it would be with John Jenkins.

Bookdealers all over the world had their say about the death of John Jenkins. Some people talked of him as a bold and imaginative pioneer, and some as an egotistical and untrustworthy manipulator. There was even an obituary, by a bookman named Tobias Rodgers, in the *Independent*, one of London's most respected dailies. It was an obituary that probably would have pleased Jenkins—because it was essentially sympathetic and because it was in such a prominent English publication and because it put the price of the Eberstadt purchase at more than ten million dollars. "He was an erratically blazing light in a rather dim world, and above all a constantly kind, gentle man," Rodgers wrote. "He described himself in one of his writings as the 'Baron Munschausen of Books.' Characteristically for one who thought so big and was so slapdash in small things he spelt the name wrongly." There was a lot of talk about how much Johnny Jenkins would have enjoyed the attention—talk that Michael Parrish, for one, resented. "People say, 'Oh, it's Johnny's last scam,' " Parrish said a couple of months after Jenkins' death. "They say, 'He pulled the wool over everyone's eyes. He's up there laughing.' But it's hard to laugh when you're dead. It's hard to reap the benefits of killing yourself." Still, people do tend to imagine scenarios. Jerry Conn, the Austin writer who knew Jenkins as a child in Beaumont, has imagined an ending to the mystery which he believes would be pure Johnny Jenkins. "I like to think that he developed a great story with a kicker," Conn said. "He wrote a novel and a movie script and he sent it to someone in Kathmandu. And he said, 'In a year, send this to my wife and the proceeds are to go to my estate, *and I'm to get proper credit*.' If it doesn't have that part, it's not Jenkins. And people would read the novel and see the movie, and they'd say, 'Oh, that guy! What a character! What a great man!' "

—CALVIN TRILLIN

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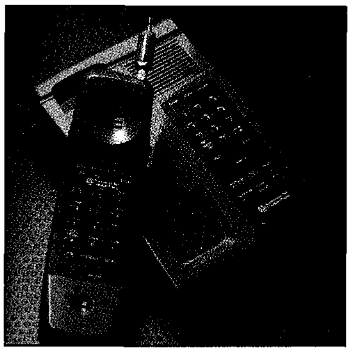

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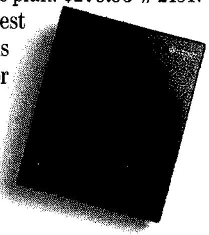

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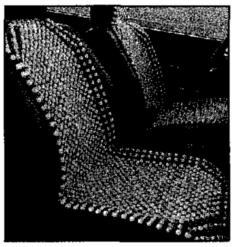

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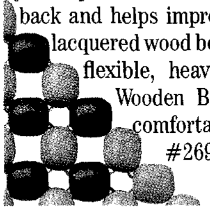

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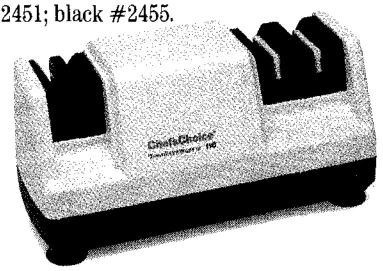

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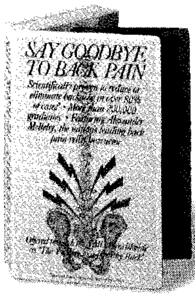

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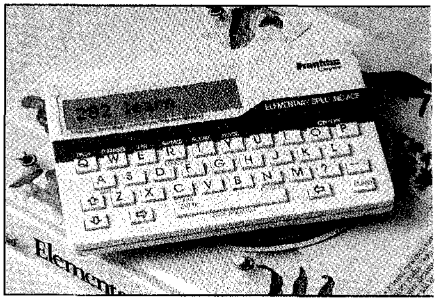

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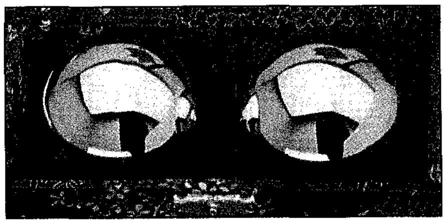

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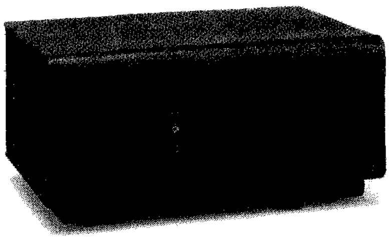

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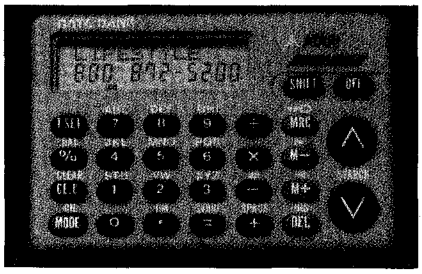

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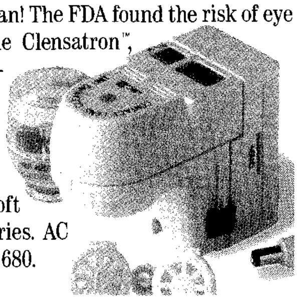

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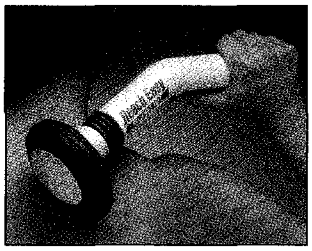

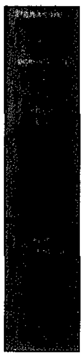

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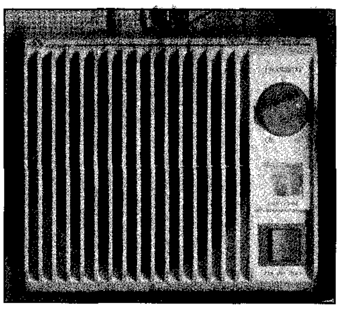

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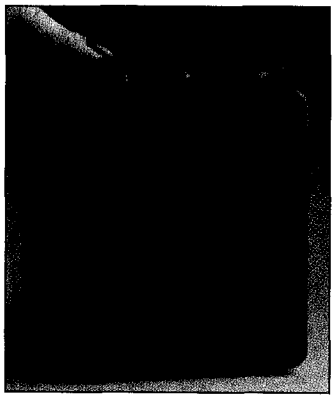

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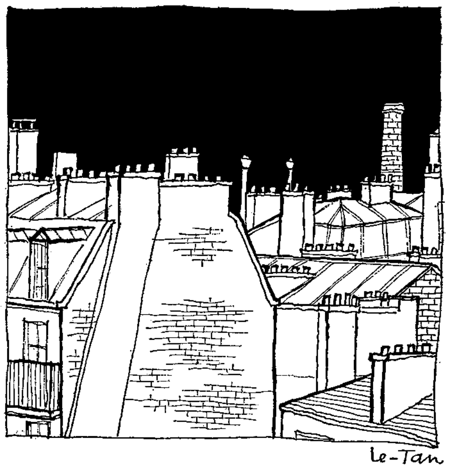
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 19

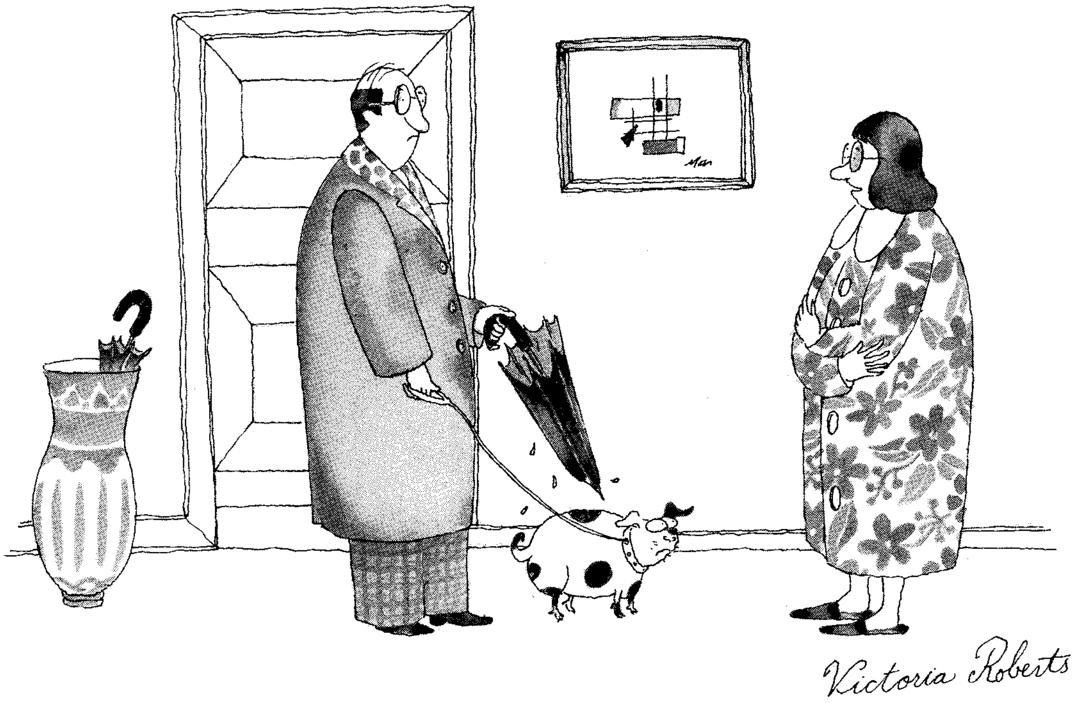
THE Bush Administration's disarray in the course of the abortive coup in Panama on Tuesday, October 3rd, was matched only by its disarray afterward. Whether the United States could have and should have made the coup succeed—as it probably, especially under the circumstances, could not have, and, for a lot of reasons, should not have—its incoherence both at the time and in the following days gives one pause. This most experienced of Administrations—the President, his national-security adviser, his Secretaries of State and Defense all had held top positions before—was utterly unprepared for a fairly predictable crisis, and stumbled its way through it. In the coup attempt's aftermath—actually, within hours of it—members of the Administration were firing on each other and on certain members of Congress who were firing on it. Key members of this very media-conscious Administration, even after meeting on Friday morning to take a vow of loyalty, and after having time to get their story straight, gave differing versions of events in their various television appearances over the following weekend. Ad-hoc policy management was followed by ad-hoc explanations. Even if the Administration came out at the right place, as it did, in deciding not to use force to help the coup succeed or to nab Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega while he was being held by the rebels, it got there by a very strange route.

United States policy toward Panama has been off the rails for some time. Something about Noriega makes Presidents—and a lot of the rest of us—act funny. Of course, our historical relationship with the country we helped to invent so as to have a canal there, and the canal itself, have created an emotional overlay to our attitude toward Panama—and its toward us. (One gets differing opinions from experts here on how important the canal actually is to us nowadays.) Panama seems to bring out something atavistic in us. And in the last several years both countries have acted out their stereotypes—Panama as the banana republic run by a tinhorn dictator, and the United States as the bullying gringo from the North. The Reagan Administration made a very big thing of Noriega, in the course of which it made two mistakes. First, it set us up as a muscle-bound tyrant, making us look ridiculous as the Administration's stratagems for getting Noriega out of power—including lengthy negotiations—failed. Week after week, American officials would predict Noriega's imminent departure. The second mistake was going ahead with indictments of Noriega early last year on charges of involvement with international drug trafficking. This move, on the part of two publicity-seeking United States Attorneys in Florida, which was apparently never clearly focussed on by national-security officials until it was too late, infinitely complicated the task of persuading Noriega to give up power and leave Panama, because there was almost nowhere he could go without facing extradition to the United States. (Should Noriega ever be brought to trial, his attorneys would have a fine time with the issue of pretrial publicity.) The indictments messed up our policy, such as it was, and have confused the thinking of policymakers ever since. In May of last year, it became known that President Reagan was entertaining the idea of having the United States drop the indictments in exchange for Noriega's surrendering power and leaving Panama. But George Bush, who by then had the Republican nomination sewn up, and James Baker, then the Treasury Secretary, who was about to take over the Bush campaign, concerned about the possible adverse effect on the Bush Presidential effort, argued to Reagan that he shouldn't drop the indictments. (Noriega turned down the deal before Reagan had a chance to drop it.) The two United States Attorneys made well-publicized trips to Washington to argue against the dropping of the indictments. (Bush was somewhat embarrassable on the subject anyway, because while he was director of the C.I.A. Noriega was on the agency's payroll, and, after the Carter Administration dropped Noriega from the payroll, the Reagan-Bush Administration put him back on.) So Bush embarked upon his Presidency with Noriega still in place.



Then Bush himself acted peculiar about Noriega. In May, after Noriega bloodily negated the results of an election, which was won by the opposition, Bush sent additional troops to Panama, and took an appeal to the Organization of American States. The O.A.S. didn't do much, but Bush was at least paying respect to the sensibilities of other Latin American governments. But, a week after the Panamanian election, Bush, in the course of flying around the country making foreign-policy speeches, also said that he would "love" to see the Panamanian Defense Forces overthrow Noriega. We don't usually call for the overthrow of heads of countries, however noxious they may be. In August, during a briefing on the hostage crisis (which the Administration has since caused to disappear from the screen, and we, with our minimal attention span, have all but forgotten), Bush said that he hoped Noriega would be kidnapped. The rather loony idea of having Noriega kidnapped and brought to the American-controlled Canal Zone, from which he could be whisked off to the Florida courts, had been kicking around since the Reagan Administration. It was apparently pushed by the then Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Elliott Abrams, who more than anyone during that time got the United States out on a very weak limb in regard to Panama. Still, it was a very odd thing for an American President to say; an adviser says it was "a slip." Not long after that, Bush said that "there is a high frustration level" about Noriega; it's never a good idea for Presidents to get "frustrated" about a foreign leader, or wise to act on that frustration.

Bush's failure—the Administration's failure gets back to him—to be prepared for the eventuality of a coup (even though he had called for one), or to have a crisis-management mechanism in place, suggests a Presidency



"You forgot to pick up the dry cleaning. It's written all over your faces."

that doesn't take governing seriously. Bush is having a wonderful time being President, and travels all over the place, but doesn't seem to take much time running the government. Running the government is the least enjoyable part of being President, and Bush, of course, watched Reagan not run the government for eight years. Even though there was good reason to expect a crisis in Panama—Bush's people had been warned that Panama could cause trouble early in his Presidency—the Administration was caught flat-footed by the coup. The President is correct to say that his encouragement didn't carry a "carte blanche" pledge of military aid for a coup, but being prepared for one is another matter. The Administration's attempt, shortly after the coup failed, to pin the blame on the Senate Intelligence Committee served to enrage the committee's chairman, David Boren, of Oklahoma, one of the Administration's most reliable Democratic friends. It was a sign of the strain among the Administration's top officials in the face of their embarrassment that these ordinarily sensible people acted in a most tetchy, and shortsighted, manner. Boren was critical of the Administration for not going far enough once there was a coup as well as for not having a contingency plan. Boren argued that it is wrong to encourage a coup, causing people to risk their lives, and then not come to the aid of the coup leaders.

Secretary of State James Baker, who isn't particularly fond of being associated with bad news, in an appearance on "Meet the Press" the Sunday after the coup, hadn't looked so unhappy since he held a press conference in New Orleans last summer to tell the press what a splendid choice Bush had made in picking Dan Quayle as his running mate. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who was saddled with being the Administration's point man in the wake of the attempted coup (not a lot of people were volunteering), needlessly angered Boren by saying in a briefing of the Senate Armed Services and Intelligence Committees on Friday, three days after the coup, that the Administration's failure to help the coup succeed was caused in large part by restrictions put on it by the Intelligence Committee. This caused Boren to claim, on Sunday on "This Week with David Brinkley," that the committee had given the President "every single word of authority that he has requested from the Intelligence Committee and every single penny that he has requested from the Intelligence Committee," and that caused Brent Scowcroft, the national-security adviser and normally a mild man, to pop off at Boren on the same program, saying that what Boren had said wasn't "literally . . . in accord with all the facts." But Scowcroft had—perhaps with forethought, since the Administration was angry with Boren—seized upon a technicality. According to Intelligence Committee sources, a small amount of money had been denied earlier this year in connection with a project having to do with the Panamanian election—but this had nothing to do with the subject at hand, which was what role the United States did play, or should have played, in a coup. The committee had approved the election project, and funded it, but then cut back on some of the funding, on the ground that the money for the project, which was threatening to become an embarrassment to the Administration, wasn't being well spent. The Administration never complained to the committee about this cutback, and it is said that not even all the money that had been approved was spent. A Republican member of the Senate Intelligence Committee says, "It is not the case that the Bush Administration wasn't given what was needed to do the job down there."

Actually, Boren is regarded within the committee as one of its most "pro-active" members when it comes to Panama (more so than even some of the Republicans), and one who likes to give the government more, not less, authority. It is the case that in the summer of 1988, while Reagan was still in office, the Senate Intelligence Committee unanimously advised against an attempt to get rid of Noriega, both because the plan looked to the committee too much like a back-door way of getting Noriega assassinated, rather than like a bona-fide coup, and because it seemed to carry too high a risk of failure. (The Intelligence Committees of the House and Senate don't have the power to actually forbid a covert activity, and their comments can be ignored, but an Adminis-

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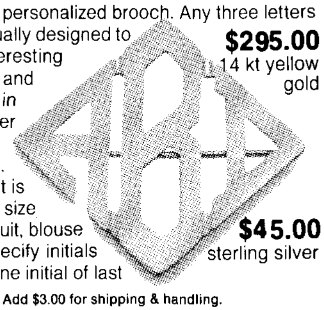

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tration is well advised to take heed if one of the committees strongly opposes a certain undertaking.) A second Reagan proposal, which had to do with trying to incite a riot, was made shortly before our Presidential election, and was greeted with a unanimous negative reaction on the part of the Senate committee, because the activity would come too close to the election and could prejudice the policy of the next President. The Bush Administration didn't resubmit the plan. An executive order signed by Gerald Ford prohibits the United States government from assassinating foreign leaders—a prohibition that came in the wake of Senate hearings by a special committee headed by the late Frank Church, of Idaho, into C.I.A. activities, including assassination attempts. This prohibition didn't stop the Reagan Administration from aiming a bomb at Muammar Qaddafi's head (and missing) in the 1986 raid on Libya. Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia and a member of the Intelligence Committee as well as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, says that the Bush Administration officials' saying that the executive order, plus the actions of the Senate Intelligence Committee, had inhibited policymakers in the most recent events in Panama is "a red herring." Nunn says that the issue of how close our government can be to an assassination attempt "doesn't have any application to this particular circumstance." (The reluctance of the leader of the coup, Major Moisés Giroldi, to kill Noriega did in the coup and resulted in Giroldi's own death.) Boren points out that the Administration could have at any time asked for more leniency on the part of the committee, but it never did. Informal discussions about loosening the rules, or at least clarifying what the rules are, are now going on between the Senate committee and the Administration. This bears watching—if we are allowed to watch.

WHAT made Boren so angry about the Administration's lack of a contingency plan was that each time the Administration had been granted permission by his committee to engage in a covert activity against Noriega, he had demanded that it have such a plan. Nunn was angered by this as well, saying, "Sometimes you have to consider the fact that your policy might succeed, and have a contingency

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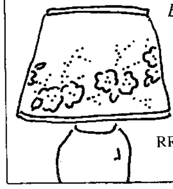

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plan that is based on the possibility of success.” The fact that Boren and Nunn spoke out as strongly as they did on the Senate floor two days after the coup made a lot of people take notice, because neither is a particularly partisan man. They spoke out in the course of the Senate's debate on an amendment to a pending bill that was offered by Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, “reaffirming” the President's authority to use our armed forces to snatch Noriega from Panama and bring him to the United States. The amendment was defeated. Helms, who has his own foreign-policy network of people in the various agencies, as well as his own foreign policy, caused the Administration no small amount of grief by announcing on the Senate floor that afternoon that his “contacts” had told him that the Panamanian rebels had held Noriega for some time—this was the first the public had heard of this—and had offered him to United States military officials in Panama, who said, according to Helms, that they didn't have the authority to take him.

Boren, in interviews and television appearances in the days following the coup, castigated the Administration not only for not having a contingency plan but also for not including the C.I.A. in the meetings of top White House officials; and for agreeing to block two roads in the course of the coup and then, after our people in Panama realized that help was coming to Noriega via a different route (a group of loyalists was flown to the airport and came in via a third road), neither telling the rebels nor offering to block that route. He also criticized the President's advisers for never asking the President for a decision on whether the third road should be blocked. In fact, the evidence is that the United States forces didn't actually block the two roads until the coup was nearly over and it was too late. Therefore the United States was involved in a partial, and futile, attempt to help the coup. The Administration's various explanations for not blocking the third road, or even telling the coup leaders that that was where help for Noriega was coming from—that the coup leaders only asked us to block the two roads; that the two roads led to and went through United States territory; that the third road went through crowded downtown Panama City; that there was no way to get in touch with the coup leaders (though there was direct contact at some points)—didn't wash with a number of senators. Top officials even complained that the coup leaders wouldn't give their phone numbers to United States officials in Panama. Boren believes that if the United States had blocked the third road, at the airport, and had at an early stage surrounded with armored personnel carriers the headquarters of the Panamanian Defense Forces, the coup could have succeeded. Not everyone (Nunn included) who believed the Administration should have acted more decisively—one way or another—goes this far, and the Administration argues that there was no way to help the coup succeed without involving United States troops in bloodshed. Nunn argues that any use of our troops to overthrow Noriega could have adverse effects on our efforts to work with Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru on diminishing the drug trade, as well as on our negotiations with the Philippines to keep our bases there.

The Administration was also quite critical of the coup's leaders, but this struck a number of people here as at least in part after-the-fact justification for the Administration's disjointed action. The Administration of course denied Helms' charge that the coup leaders had offered us Noriega—saying that a message that had come to Washington from the American Embassy in Panama had been “garbled.” For some time on the day of the coup the Pentagon was being informed by United States military in Panama that the coup leaders weren't willing to turn Noriega over to us, while the State Department (where Helms is believed to have got his information) and the C.I.A. were receiving word that the coup leaders were willing to turn Noriega over. (Helms was also making calls to his own sources in Panama.) The Administration was especially sensitive on this point, which gets back to the obsession with Noriega and the foolishness of the indictments. (Noriega may be a figure in the drug traffic, but he's a sideshow to the main

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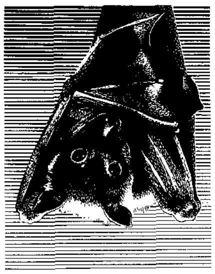

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act, which takes place to his south.) In fact, the Administration's own reconstructions of events indicate that it was preoccupied with whether the coup leaders would turn over Noriega, or whether there was some relatively unbloody way to get hold of him and bring him out of Panama and to the United States to stand trial. One of its criticisms of the coup leaders was that they were apparently unwilling to turn Noriega over to us—they hoped to persuade him to accept genteel retirement in Panama—but this overlooks the fact that such are Panamanian sensibilities on this subject that even some of our strongest Panamanian friends, and Noriega's greatest enemies, have said they wouldn't turn him over to the United States.

In the course of the Panamanian crisis, top officials held ad-hoc, informal meetings and made ad-hoc decisions—slowly—and proceeded on the basis of confused intelligence information. Nunn is particularly critical of the Administration for not having had what is termed policy guidance from the President: this would have laid out our conditions for supporting a coup—such as recognition by the coup plotters of the legally elected government—and set forth when we should furnish intelligence. Nunn says, "It's not as if the coup occurred in Ghana, or Rumania." Not only was there no crisis-management team, consisting of officials below the President and the Cabinet level, but there was no coördination of the intelligence from the field. Administration officials have explained that they were quite busy while the coup was going on—the President of Mexico was in town, and Cheney was escorting the Soviet Defense Minister, General Dmitri Yazov, on a tour of Gettysburg. (In fact, Cheney, while riding in a bus beside Yazov, took a highly important call about the coup on his latest-model, pocket-size cellular phone. Yazov was fascinated by the phone.) Ordinarily, there should be a "fusion of intelligence"—a process in which the varying pieces of intelligence coming in from various sources are weighed against each other, on the spot and in Washington. The goal is not necessarily to force the agencies to agree but to at least find out where and why they disagree.

The C.I.A. people in Panama took the coup leaders more seriously than our military people there did—which at least partially explains why Cheney was more negative in his assessment of them than others have been. The C.I.A. people in Panama—whom State Department and C.I.A. officials tended to believe—said that Major Giroldi was sincere, and did seek to overthrow Noriega, while Cheney, who was getting his information from the military command in Panama, has stressed that there was reason to be dubious, especially because Giroldi had helped Noriega put down a previous coup. Nunn points out that it usually is insiders who conduct coups. The failure to include a C.I.A. official in the White House meetings has never been adequately explained; the C.I.A. director, William Webster, was out of town, but he is hardly the only person in the agency. The President and other top officials (despite recent denials), as well as members of the Intelligence Committees, are known to be unhappy with Webster—they feel he spends too much time being social and playing tennis, and too little getting on top of his job—but it isn't clear whether this was a factor in the omission of agency officials from the top councils. A factor may well have been that Bush, as a former C.I.A. director, felt he could handle the job of examining the raw intelligence himself—as he did in this instance. In the case of Panama, there has for some time been tension between the Pentagon on the one hand and the State Department and the C.I.A. on the other. The State Department was during the Reagan Administration and apparently still is comparatively gung ho about doing something to get rid of Noriega. The Pentagon, which has responsibility for the lives of American soldiers in Panama, and also for their many dependents living there, tends to be more cautious. Last year, the Pentagon requested permission to remove the dependents from Panama, but State objected—yet the dependents could be in danger in the event of military action on our part.

ANTIQUES
Eve Olitsky

One problem the Administration had in getting its story out straight was the confusion of events, but the other—and probably more important—one was that it expected criticism from the left for having anything to do with the coup, and was taken by surprise by the fact that most of the criticism (including from people on the left) consisted of charges that it should have done more. For one reason or another, Administration officials at first made statements—"We were not involved in the planning of this or discussion of this or execution of this" (White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater); and "We don't even know the individuals involved" (White House Chief of Staff John Sununu)—that later proved untrue. (Most reporters think that Fitzwater himself had been misled.) Then, as the criticism that they hadn't done enough grew, officials were busy explaining how much we had done and why we hadn't done more. Administration officials are justified in saying that had we used more force, or suffered loss of American lives, and the coup had failed, many of the same critics would have attacked them for getting so involved in the coup—but that is beside the point.

The White House last week announced steps it was taking to tighten up procedures in the case of future foreign-policy crises—the establishment of a crisis-management team below Cabinet level, and other measures to improve the communications among second-level officials in the course of a crisis. This is pretty basic stuff. (And Bush was put in charge of "crisis management" during the Reagan Administration.) In his comments to the press at the end of the week the President said, "I wouldn't mind using force now if it could be done in a prudent manner." He added, "We want to see Mr. Noriega out." So the Administration learned the technical lessons, but it's not clear whether it has learned the substantive ones—that all too much is made of Panama and Noriega, and that our obsession with the disagreeable dictator may carry more danger than the dictator himself.

THE weightlessness of the Bush Administration, the President's reluctance to lead, when coupled with the fear on the part of most members of

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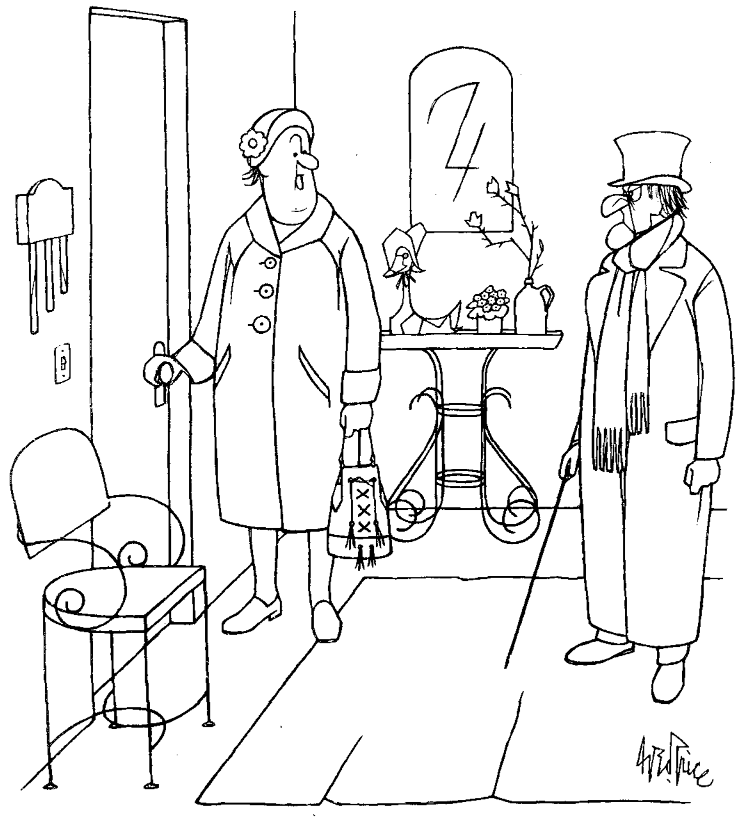

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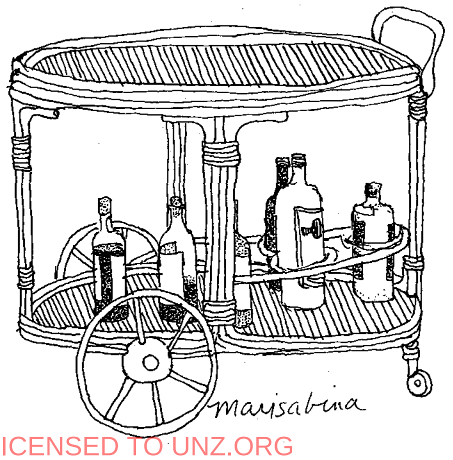
Congress of taking any steps that might make a substantial number of their constituents unhappy, makes for a flight from reality. Hard questions aren't being addressed. What actions are taken tend to make things worse. In the leadership vacuum, special interests have more room to play. The fundamental unseriousness of the Bush Administration in dealing with the budget deficit has led to actions that make the problem worse, and a paralysis in dealing with the most serious issues facing the country. It leads to actions taken by Congress—some with the Administration's collusion, some with its strong, if misguided, urging—that take us further and further from solving any important problems. The President's insistence on a cut in the capital gains tax encouraged a flood of proposed tax breaks, at a time when that is not exactly the direction we should be going in. If the President is going to be irresponsible, a number of members of Congress reasoned, no point in being responsible themselves. The state of our politics is such now that there is no reward for being responsible, or for facing hard questions. The President, borne aloft by a high popularity rating, plays "Let's pretend." He summons a "summit" on education with the nation's governors, the result of which is a vague set of goals. The Democrats, most anxious to avoid the charge of "tax and spend," colluded in this avoidance of calling for anything expensive to deal with the fact that we are turning out so many illiterates, and such an uneducated populace.

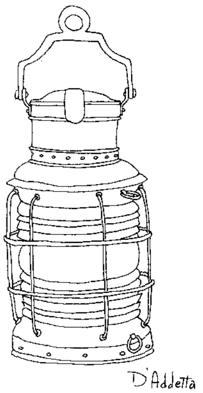
In July, budget director Richard Darman gave a much remarked-upon speech castigating the national impulse to live for the moment, calling it "now-nowism," which he defined as "our collective short-sightedness, our obsession with the here and now, our reluctance adequately to address the future." Darman actually does understand (and has understood for some time) that we are dangerously ignoring our inner cities, and recklessly piling up debt for future generations to pay, but the Administration he is an important part of is practicing "now-nowism" every bit as much as the Reagan Administration, of which he was also an important part. Darman may feel that, after a year of honoring the "no new taxes" pledge of his President, he will be able to wheel him around—just as he used to feel he could wheel Reagan around. And Bush certainly gave signals at the outset of his Administration that he felt obliged to honor his pledge for only a year (that isn't what he told the voters), but the political pressures on him are growing to hold to the pledge until *after next* year's congressional elections. His political operatives argue that "no new taxes" has become the Republican touchstone, and it should not be disturbed before the elections. The thing is, after next year's elections we'll soon be facing another Presidential election, and it may begin to seem expedient to hold to the "no new taxes" line until then.

If there is no reward for being responsible, there is little incentive to do anything serious about the budget deficit—and nothing serious is being done. As members of Congress who trouble themselves to learn the facts know, the numbers are even worse than those that are bandied about and said to be the "official" ones. Though Congress is now struggling to get the deficit down—mainly through ruses—to the target of a hundred and ten billion dollars set by the Gramm-Rudman law, the real deficit is closer to a hundred and fifty billion dollars, and is actually close to two hundred and twenty billion dollars if the "surplus" in the Social Security "trust fund" is removed. (The Social Security funds are being used to fund other programs.) As a result of the lack of seriousness about the budget deficit, the interest on the national debt is now nearly two hundred and fifty billion dollars a year. There are a lot of more useful ways that money could be spent. Increasingly, the more responsible members of Congress—and there are some—know that they are participating in a sham, and are depressed about it. The sham goes much deeper than the tricks and gimmicks that are used to make the Gramm-Rudman targets seem to be met; it reaches the point where the process is so corroded and corrupted that members don't feel they are any longer serious legislators. Washington is drifting.



The inability to act sensibly, even rationally, now has the Congress and the President in an awful mess. The "sequestration," or across-the-board cuts, which officially (if not actually) went into effect Monday night, because the Gramm-Rudman target for this year had not been met in time, is an emblem of failure. The theory behind putting sequestration in the Gramm-Rudman law was that it would be such an awful prospect that it would never have to be invoked. But for some time this year the general feeling here was that sequestration would be no big deal, because everyone knew it wouldn't last—that the Congress would, in time, complete work on a budget that met the target. (This is what happened two years ago, after the stock market crash.) As it happens, once a sequester goes into effect, it can be removed by the Congress and the President even if the Gramm-Rudman target is never met. And a growing number of people here have recently begun to look favorably on the idea of leaving the sequester in effect. For one thing, it would consist of real cuts, rather than the numerous phony ones in the reconciliation bill—the major, non-appropriations bill that Congress passes in order to meet the Gramm-Rudman target. Congress has completed action on only two out of the thirteen appropriations bills. When Darman said last Sunday that it might be preferable for the sequester to stay in effect, the general interpretation was that he felt this put the Administration in a good negotiating position vis-à-vis the Congress, which presumably would panic at the idea of having the sequester be permanent. But the sequester would be painful for the Administration as well. Among government officials, Cheney is most concerned about having to impose the cuts—the Pentagon must absorb nearly half of them—because a large portion of the cutting would have to come out of personnel; the development of a weapon takes so long that there is little to be saved quickly there. Since in writing the Gramm-Rudman law members of Congress saw to it that many pet programs—Social Security, Medicare, programs for the poor, veterans' and civil-service pensions—

were exempt, a number of members take a relaxed view of sequestration. Some find a lasting sequester tempting also because of next year's Gramm-Rudman requirement that the deficit be cut by an excruciating amount—by as much as sixty billion dollars—to reach the target of a deficit of "only" sixty-four billion dollars. To have a sequester this year would help reach that goal at least a little bit, and would also set a precedent. A growing number of House Democrats feel that if the President continues to insist that the budget can be cut without raising taxes, the Democrats should say, "Fine, you do it," and not help him avoid a sequester. This year, Bush avoided proposing many specific budget cuts, throwing the problem into Congress's lap.



The President's rather strange insistence on a cut in the capital gains tax has caused him all sorts of trouble, and has contributed to the "What the hell" mood here. It embittered relations with the House Democratic leadership, making coöperation on, among other things, next year's budget less promising. In the Senate, the Administration's insistence on getting a straight up-and-down vote on whether to add the capital gains tax cut—which had been defeated in the Finance Committee—to the reconciliation bill on the Senate floor caused a week's delay on the bill while the haggling between the White House and the Senate Democratic leadership went on behind the scenes. Because of the special parliamentary procedures that are in order for a reconciliation bill, adding the capital gains proposal on the floor would require sixty votes, rather than a simple majority, and the proposal didn't have that many votes—though it probably had a majority. The Democratic leaders held firm (this is unusual) against giving the White House any special deal on capital gains, and eventually, at the end of last week, Republican senators persuaded the White House to give up for the time being. But by now Darman, in pressing so hard, had created some ill will among Senate Democrats—for which there will be a price. A number of senators who support a cut in the capital gains tax were willing to give up an immediate vote on it in order to give themselves time to try to round up sixty votes, or in the hope that another bill would come along shortly to which it could be added. But at the moment it's not clear that that could happen without another requirement for a sixty-vote margin, because such a proposal would lose revenue, or could set off a filibuster. Once the impasse on capital gains was broken in the Senate at the end of last week, both parties agreed to strip the by now heavily laden Senate reconciliation bill, which came to 1,376 pages and had in it extraneous legislation on all manner of subjects as well as a substantial number of tax breaks that had been voted by the Finance Committee. Old habits die hard.

The spirit of the Tax Reform Act of 1986—that low marginal rates would be enacted in exchange for elimination of all sorts of tax breaks—has been shattered. Now, with the President in the vanguard, the movement is toward low marginal rates plus tax breaks. The capital gains differential was the main target for elimination. The agreement to strip the reconciliation bill was reached because the Senate was running out of time and because it also looked silly. But the House-passed reconciliation bill—1,935 pages—does have all sorts of extraneous legislation in it, as well as a cut in the capital gains tax. The point of putting all manner of legislation in the reconciliation bill is that the bill is deemed essential, and probably veto-proof. Now that the Senate bill has been stripped, congressional leaders are struggling with the question of how to reconcile the big, fat House measure—which has in it numerous mini-bills members feel strongly about—with the relatively lean Senate bill.

Inevitably, the House's approving a cut in the capital gains tax was widely interpreted as evidence that the new Democratic leadership—which had been so enthusiastically hailed when it took charge a few months ago—was ineffective. Fashions change quickly here. Much of the blame was laid on House Speaker Thomas Foley, who was accused—by a number of House Democrats and in the press and among the many sidelines coaches here—of not moving quickly enough to establish

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the Democrats' alternative to the capital gains tax cut, and of not exercising more discipline over his troops. Foley is accused of being too lenient by some House Democrats who sometimes seem almost nostalgic for his predecessor, Jim Wright; but Wright's more autocratic ways were resented by many of the same people. On the key roll-call vote, sixty-four Democrats broke with the leadership over the capital gains issue. One reason the number was large was that once people see that a position they would rather not take is going down to defeat, they feel freer to take the other position. Martyrdom isn't particularly popular. Another reason the number was so large was that the capital gains provision had become something of a pork-barrel bill—it included a tax break for timber, a subject of interest to a large number of delegations. Also, members of a state delegation are inclined to vote as their member of the Ways and Means Committee does, because members of that committee are in a position to do a great number of favors; six Ways and Means Democrats supported the capital gains differential. The one-fourth of the House Democrats who broke with the leadership reflected the one-fourth of the Ways and Means Democrats who supported the cut in the capital gains tax.

The reason the House Democratic leadership lost on capital gains was quite simple: it didn't have the votes. It considered the strategy some said it should have adopted—of not offering an alternative to the capital gains cut but simply having a straight-up-and-down vote on it, a vote of ideological purity—but figured that this would have been defeated by an even greater margin. The leaders also believed that if they did this they would be accused of being too negative. The alternative the leadership did choose—restoring Individual Retirement Accounts for the upper-middle class (lower-income people can still have them) and raising the top marginal rate on the highest-income people—encountered a problem that is a sad reflection of the current state of affairs. That the leadership felt it had to give something away (I.R.A.s) in order to defeat the capital gains cut was disheartening enough—in the Senate, an I.R.A. proposal was adopted by the Finance Committee but then stripped away—but the difficulty the tax increase ran into shows what we have come to. The proposal was to eliminate an anomaly (the "bubble") in the tax code whereby people at the top income level pay at a rate of twenty-eight per cent, and then thirty-three per cent, and then (at an income of about a hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars for a married couple) back to twenty-eight per cent. Under the Democrats' proposal, once people started paying at the thirty-three-per-cent rate, they would continue to do so. The Democrats added this to the I.R.A. proposal because under the rules they had to compensate for the revenue the I.R.A. proposal would lose. Right away, Republicans charged—and numerous cowering Democrats accepted—that the elimination of the bubble was a "tax increase"; even an increase on the uppermost income, eliminating an anomaly in the tax law, was considered by many to be bad politics. In the eyes of many, the House Democratic leadership had blundered. Also, it was widely asserted that the Democrats had erred in playing class politics—charging that the Republicans favored the wealthy—but if this was such an obvious mistake nobody pointed that out before the Democratic position went down to defeat in the House. Because of the budget necessities of this year and next—when most people expected the bubble to be eliminated as part of a grand budget compromise (which is rapidly turning into a mirage)—neither part of the Democratic proposal should have been made; but near-term exigencies prevailed. So now the Republican apparatus is sending out news releases attacking "tax to the max" Democrats.

THE House's panicked repeal of the catastrophic-health-care program was expected, but the vote margin—360 to 66—came as a surprise even to its sponsors. This represented a switch of three hundred and twenty-eight votes since the program was approved by the House a year earlier. A proposal by the House Ways and Means Committee to revise the program and lower the surtax to be paid by the wealthiest of the elderly—who were being the most vociferous in their objections to the program—got trampled in the stampede. Ways and Means Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, Democrat of Illinois, who has had a rough year, said angrily on the House floor, "Because we in this Congress cannot take the heat from a wealthy few, all principles are being abandoned. The House is in full retreat." Rostenkowski continued, "While we have been elected to represent our constituents, that does not mean we should be cowed or intimidated by every special-interest group that spreads misleading information. . . . It does not mean we must succumb to the whims of a few and abandon our principles at the expense of many others." Rostenkowski, who had opposed the capital gains tax cut, was also referring to other special-interest legislation in the proposals adopted by his committee, including one that repealed a section of the tax code which prohibited discrimination by employers in providing health benefits to their employees. This, too, was adopted by the House.

Though the Administration more or less believed that some form of the catastrophic-illness insurance should be retained, it ducked the issue until the House had already done its deed, in the belief that there was no point in trying to buck such a powerful tide. Louis Sullivan, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, made a speech to the National Press Club on the day after the House vote saying that repeal of the program would be "unwise health policy" and "an unfortunate act of political expedience." This was a little late—and on the same day, while the Senate was debating the catastrophic-illness program, Sullivan and Darman gave senators conflicting advice on what alternative the Administration backed. The Senate ultimately adopted a proposal to eliminate the surtax and cut back substantially on benefits. The Senate, being more insulated against momentary passions, since senators have six-year terms—but usually acting as if only slightly more insulated—behaved in a somewhat less panicked way than the House did, but it still virtually eviscerated the program so as to avert the rage of the better-off elderly.

Inevitably, the deliberations on what should be in the final bill to meet the Gramm-Rudman target will take some time—while sequestration proceeds. At some point, it will start to bite, and not seem so theoretical. But even when the Congress has got itself out of the immediate, tangled thicket it has got itself into, nothing of much importance will have been resolved.

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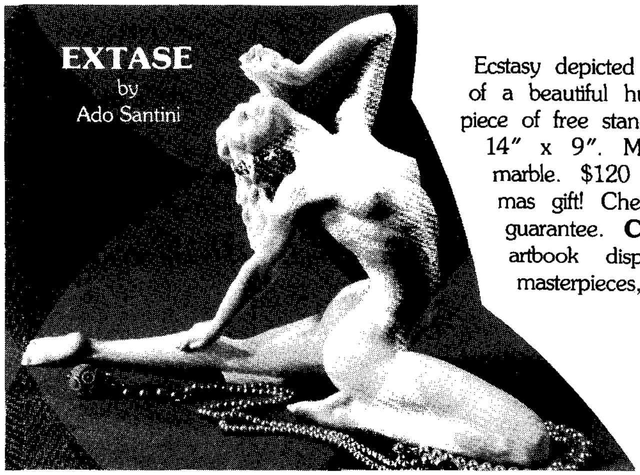

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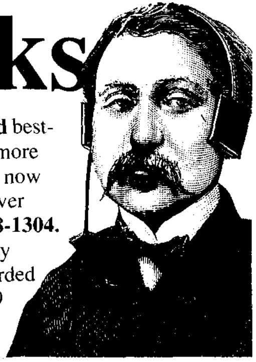

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A Free Man

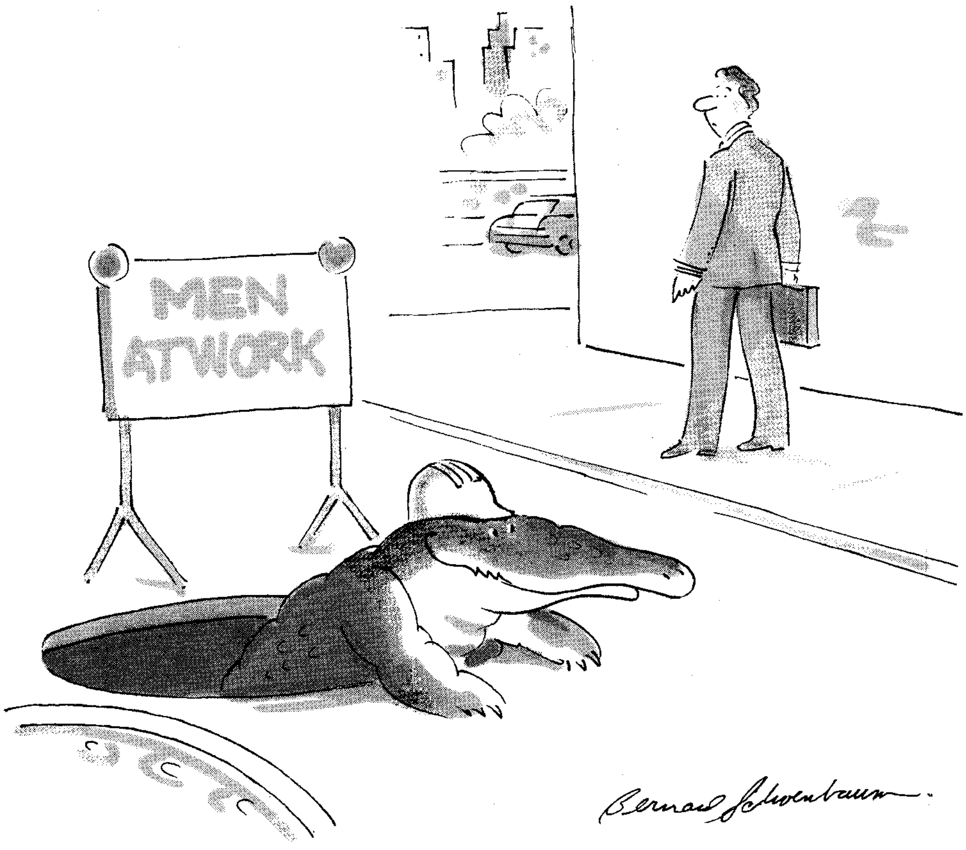
IN "All God's Dangers," at the Lamb's, Cleavon Little portrays Nate Shaw—a pseudonym for Ned Cobb, whose parents were born in slavery but who himself, as much by his own efforts as by those of the United States Constitution, became a truly free man. Actually, "portrays" is too weak a word for Mr. Little's performance; for all practical purposes, Mr. Little *is* Nate Shaw from eight o'clock until five of ten, five evenings a week.

"All God's Dangers" is a monologue, based on hours and hours of taped interviews that Mr. Cobb gave to the historian Theodore Rosengarten for a book published fifteen years ago. (Mr. Rosengarten is a co-author of the play, with Michael and Jennifer Hadley, who produced it, together with John Cullen.) Monologues make for tricky theatre, especially for somebody like me, who was raised on Ruth Draper. She peopled the stage with vivid imaginary characters, so that there was never any question about who was listening to her conversation. Most monologuists walk on, eyes fixed on the middle distance, and start to talk, and my first thought is: He's crazy—there's nobody there. Mr. Little leaves us in no doubt: he's talking to the audience. Time after time, he acknowledges our presence, with a quick, private smile or by catching an eye out front. Like Roy Dotrice's John Aubrey, Mr. Little's Shaw is our host, and he easily assumes a host's responsibilities—to make us welcome and never to be a bore. He is an engaging, humorous fellow, with a strong story to tell.

At the opening, we hear six pistol shots, and Mr. Little is seen upstage center with gun in hand. We quickly learn that Nate Shaw is now a very old man (even older than the character Mr. Little played in "I'm Not Rappaport"). Born in Alabama, he was sent into the fields when he was nine by his father, who turned down a preacher's offer to educate the boy. At twenty-one, he married a girl named Hannah, with whom he lived happily for forty-four years. (He had nine children, who, give or take a tiff here and there, were satisfying and affectionate.) Professionally, his life became more complicated. As a prosperous farmer—*tenant* farmer—he became subject to all the abuses of the sharecropper system but time after time refused (on Hannah's advice) to sign mortgage papers or anything else that would put him at a disadvantage with the greedy white man. In 1932, he joined a sharecroppers' union: police, gunfire, arrest, and twelve years in prison. He lists the changes for the better that have come with the civil-rights movement. All along, however, Nate has been asked to betray his fellow-unionists and has refused, and he has been asked, by any number of sneaky means, to give up what was rightfully his and has refused. At the opening, before he starts reminiscing, he tells us, "Young white man come to see me. . . . I listened at him; he was familiar with me . . . 'Mr. Shaw, you done right.' 'White man, you really think I done right? . . . If I die tryin' to defend myself, why, let me go.' " At the end, the gun is still in his hand.

Mr. Little is worthy of the marvellous lines he speaks, and the temptation to quote and quote (and let him write his own review) is almost overwhelming. He has mastered a rather strong Alabama country accent, with its "hoid" and "boid" and "my feelings was hoit," which sounds like New York. He sprinkles his lines with thumbnail impersonations of friends and enemies who cross Nate's path, all of them entertaining and right on key. His onstage deportment is so at home, so casual, as he takes his jacket off, or chews a radish neatly, or soaks strips of wood and then weaves them into a basket he is working on, that it's hard to believe there was ever a director present. There was, though—William Partlan, who has already shepherded the show to a couple of regional theatres, and presumably will do so to many more. G. W. Mercier's setting—an almost abstract log cabin at each side of the stage, with a hillock and pump in the center—is deceptively simple and provocative (and portable); the subtle lighting is by Tina Charney. The main thing is the show, however, and the chance it affords us to meet a truly heroic man. I can't wait to read Mr. Rosengarten's book, also called "All God's Dangers," and now available in paperback; it offers five hundred and fifty-six pages of Ned Cobb.

—EDITH OLIVER



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BOOKS

Washington's Philippines

IN the last four years, the United States has given the Philippines just over a billion and a half dollars in economic and military assistance, making the archipelago one of the top four beneficiaries of American aid. Now American officials are promoting what they call a mini-Marshall Plan for the Philippines: three and a half billion dollars over the next five years, provided by us and by Japan and other industrialized nations. What is it about the Philippines that accounts for such largesse? If humanitarian considerations determined levels of aid, the Philippines would receive less than probably every country in sub-Saharan Africa. If our policymakers were to consider both need and national interest—our interest, that is—then Mexico's claim would demand more attention than that of the Philippines. The Philippines is staggering under a twenty-nine-billion-dollar debt, but Mexico's debt is four times that, and economic and political turmoil in Mexico would pose a threat to the United States far more immediate and grave than instability and economic stagnation in the Philippines. Yet if Mexico is closer to home, the Filipinos are closer to us. As Stanley Karnow demonstrates in "In Our Image" (Random House; $24.95), a history of United States involvement in the Philippines, we have been trying throughout this century to make the Filipinos extensions of ourselves.

Astonishingly, given the length and the intimate nature of our involvement in the archipelago, this is the first popular account of "America's Empire in the Philippines," as Karnow aptly subtitles his book. Karnow is a journalist by trade, and a distinguished one, but in this book he also excels as a historian. He has been covering the Philippines and other parts of Asia for three decades, and this experience adds valuably to his understanding of the land and its people, but it is his chapters on the political climate in America at the turn of the century, and on the debate then between imperialists and isolationists, that I found the most engrossing and the most revealing. His analysis of America's postwar involvement in the Philippines falters by comparison.

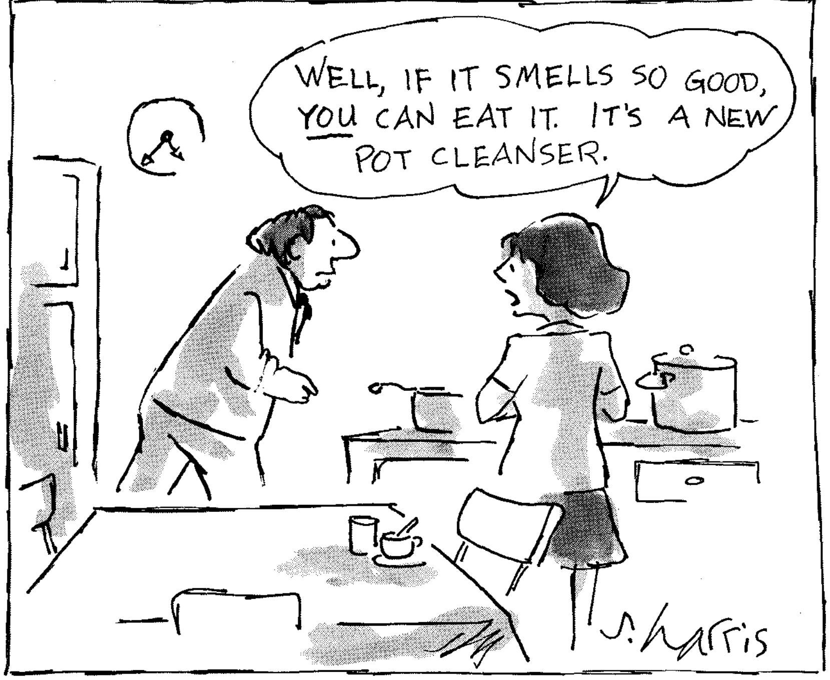
The imperialists at the turn of the century included businessmen who wanted new markets and resources, and there were also idealists who considered it America's manifest destiny "to bring the benefits of its civilization to the ignorant and misguided abroad," as Karnow puts it. Some capitalist tycoons, Andrew Carnegie among them, argued that America should concentrate on developing its own vast continent rather than squander its wealth on foreign adventures, and others argued that it ran contrary to the American belief in government by consent to subjugate foreign peoples. But the imperialists won. In April, 1898, Congress declared war on Spain—the only time it has ever voted for war without a direct request from the President.

Once the Spanish were defeated, Washington had to face what to do next. If the United States didn't take possession of the Philippines, another country might, one argument went—an argument that has continued to underlie our Philippine policy. The Americans therefore turned their guns on the Philippine nationalist movement, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, who had declared the country's independence six weeks after Admiral George Dewey sank the Spanish armada in Manila Bay. Aguinaldo and his forces are often dismissed as "rebels," and their struggle is called an "insurrection"—as if it were an uprising against a lawfully constituted government. But, as Karnow notes, the war was in fact a war of conquest and subjugation, "as cruel as any conflict in the annals of imperialism." Two hundred thousand Filipinos were killed, most of them civilians, and four thousand American soldiers died. (A three-hour PBS series based on the book and narrated by Karnow, which was broadcast in May, gives a somewhat varnished account of this war, only glancingly critical of America's conduct. An American major's order to kill all Filipinos over the age of ten, for example, is presented as an understandable, if not entirely justified, response to the killing of fifty-two American soldiers by Philippine guerrillas.)

When the war ended, Americans sought to "atone" for their brutality, Karnow writes, and he goes on, "Inspired by a sense of moral obligation, they believed it to be their responsibility to bestow the spiritual and material blessings of their exceptional society on the new possession—as though providence had anointed them to be its savior." A sense of moral obligation still infuses American foreign policy toward the Philippines. Back then, however, it wasn't money that America sent but teachers and doctors. Smallpox and cholera were virtually eliminated. Philippine literacy was soon the highest in Southeast Asia—but, of course, it was literacy in English. In the schools, American teachers drilled the Filipino children in American history and American heroes, not their own.

"Compared to European colonialism, the United States was indeed a model of enlightenment," Karnow says, but he makes it clear that the American colonialism was flawed. Among other things, the Americans reinforced the land-tenure system that the Spanish had put in place and "coddled the elite while disregarding the appalling plight of the peasants, thus perpetuating a feudal oligarchy that widened the gap between the rich and poor." That legacy of American colonialism is palpable today. Less palpable, but equally devastating for the Filipinos, is what the Americans did to their character. "Filipinos readily accepted American styles and institutions," Karnow writes. "They learned to behave, dress and eat like Americans, sing American songs and speak Americanized English. Their lawyers familiarized themselves with American

ON THE HOUSE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ABOUT THE CAST

ROD ALBRIGHT, the husband, was most recently a ship's captain in the cartoon "Let's look at that whale from this side."

MARCIA VON NUDWIK, the wife, was last seen in the background of the cocktail-party cartoon "Pass the peanuts and a book or two."

The set is by **LES ROMAIN**, who designed the offices for the business cartoons "Not another contract!" and "Meet my secretary."

• •

jurisprudence, and their politicians absorbed American democratic procedures, displaying unique skills in American parliamentary practices." The trouble was that the Filipinos "never became the Americans that Americans sought to make them." The consequence for the Filipinos, Karnow says, is that "to this day they are trying to define their national identity."

IN 1946, the Filipinos finally gained their sovereignty—formally, at least. "Dependent independence" is Karnow's characterization of their relationship with the United States in the years since the Second World War; others have called it "neocolonialism." The key American figure in the immediate postwar period was Edward Lansdale, the legendary C.I.A. operative who was later named by President Kennedy to head the supersecret Operation Mongoose—the plan to eliminate Castro. With the Communist victory in China and the outbreak of the war in Korea, the Philippines was seen as critical to America's security. Lansdale selected Ramon Magsaysay, a member of the Philippine Congress, to be "America's boy" in the Philippines. Lansdale and the C.I.A. ran Magsaysay's 1953 Presidential campaign, writing his speeches, providing him with suitcasefuls of money, and successfully wooing American correspondents to write hagiographies of him. Magsaysay won, defeating the incumbent, Elpidio Quirino, who was corrupt and incompetent, and once their man was in the palace Lansdale and the C.I.A. could complete the task for which they had originally been sent to the Philippines, which was to end the Hukbalahap rebellion—an indigenous peasant uprising that Washington chose to see as Communist-inspired and directed.

The Huks were eventually put down; Lansdale moved on to Vietnam, filled with a sense of mission and a conviction that he knew what was best for these Asians as well; and the Philippines went along as it had—run by and for the benefit of the oligarchy. In 1957, Magsaysay was killed in a plane crash, and Carlos García, the Vice-President and Foreign Minister, became President. Corruption and graft were pervasive. García pocketed seven hundred million dollars one year from the granting of import licenses, which were distributed by his wife and his private secretary. He defended an aide charged with fraudulent activity by saying that the aide was "providing for the future of his family." Once again, America felt compelled to intervene to save the Filipinos from themselves. Joseph Smith, another C.I.A. operative, was sent to the Philippines in 1958 to straighten things out. "It was the American century, and we Americans had been chosen to do good in the world," Smith, who considered himself a liberal Democrat, explained to Karnow.

What was it that kept us so heavily involved in the Philippines after independence had been granted? Was there no one in this country saying that the buying of elections in an independent country was inconsistent with what America stood for? Karnow doesn't probe these issues; he doesn't go into America's immediate postwar policies as thoroughly as he goes into the political debates at the turn of the century. Or maybe there were no debates. Maybe we slipped into an interventionist policy easily. The intellectual foundation for the continued United States intervention in the Philippines following the war may be found, I think, in a top-secret memorandum written in 1948 by George Kennan. Addressing what American policy in the Far East should be in order to contain the Soviet Union, he said, "We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population. This disparity is particularly great between ourselves and the peoples of Asia." He went on, "Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this disparity without positive detriment to our national security," and he concluded that United States policy in the Pacific should concentrate on insuring that two countries "remain in hands we can control or rely on." Those countries were Japan and the Philippines. Gone was any pretext that we were only trying to do what was best for the Filipinos. Kennan was brutally candid: we would do in the Philippines what was best for us.

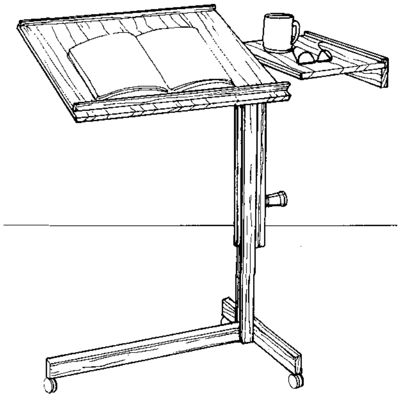
BY the time Ferdinand Marcos became President, in 1965, it was America's intervention in another Asian country—Vietnam—that determined our policy in the Philippines. "We had to submit to Marcos for the sake of the bases," an aide to President Johnson said, referring to Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base, two of the largest American military installations overseas. The Johnson Administration was the first but not the last to submit to Marcos for the sake of the bases. The Carter Administration compromised on human rights for the sake of the bases. The Reagan Administration, supposedly committed to reducing federal spending, gave Marcos a nine-hundred-million-dollar five-year package (about double what he had been receiving) for the sake of the bases. Just last March, Stephen Solarz, the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, arguing for more aid to the Philippines, declared the aid necessary because of our "vital" interests in the Philippines. The fact is that the bases aren't vital. Moving them would be costly but would not seriously jeopardize our security. Indeed, the architect of our containment policy, George Kennan, advocated in 1977 "immediate, complete, resolute and wordless withdrawal" from the Philippine bases. And during the most recent negotiations on the bases, when American officials thought the Philippine demands were unreasonable, Admiral William Crowe, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Karnow that the United States might move the bases. "We don't want to be where we're not wanted," he explained.

"Our relations with the Philippines can never be normal while our bases remain," Francis T. Underhill, a career Foreign Service officer, declared in a lengthy cable to Washington in 1977. "For the Filipinos they create contradictions and strains which twist and warp every aspect of their attitudes toward us. . . . The base relationship also helps to perpetuate in the Philippines a neurotic, manipulative, psychically crippling form of dependency. As a consequence it is a country that is difficult to take seriously." Karnow, however, apparently feels that we need to retain our bases in the Philippines, and he says that over the years Washington was "realistic" in not pushing Marcos harder on human rights, for fear of jeopardizing the agreement on the bases.

On the matter of human rights Karnow says, "Fourth of July oratory notwithstanding, morality has never been the test for America's diplomatic ties to other nations. To hold Marcos to American standards of behavior would be tantamount to breaking relations with the Russians unless they shut down the Gulag." This is one of the most puzzling statements in the book. It's hard to understand how pressuring Marcos to end corruption and to respect human rights is tantamount to breaking relations—an extreme measure, often a prelude to war. We have maintained diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and South Africa, with Nicaragua and Panama, while pressuring them, through instruments ranging from public criticism to covert actions, to adopt higher standards of human-rights behavior. Considering that we were the principal financial and military backer of the Philippines, one would think that we could have put pressure on Marcos without breaking with him. The Carter Administration could have applied pressure by not sending Vice-President Mondale to the Philippines in 1978, for example—a visit that buoyed Marcos and dispirited the opposition, coming, as it did, after another blatantly fraudulent Philippine election. The Reagan Administration was under no compulsion to invite the Marcoses to the White House for a state visit in 1982. Cuts in American aid would also have sent a message to Marcos.

Nor does Karnow's statement square with his criticism of Jeane Kirkpatrick, a few pages later. Kirkpatrick rose from academe to high-visibility government service on the basis of an article that sought to distinguish between "totalitarian" and "authoritarian" regimes; America could support

Lay Down Your Arms



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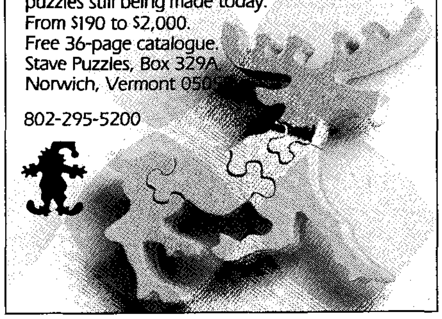

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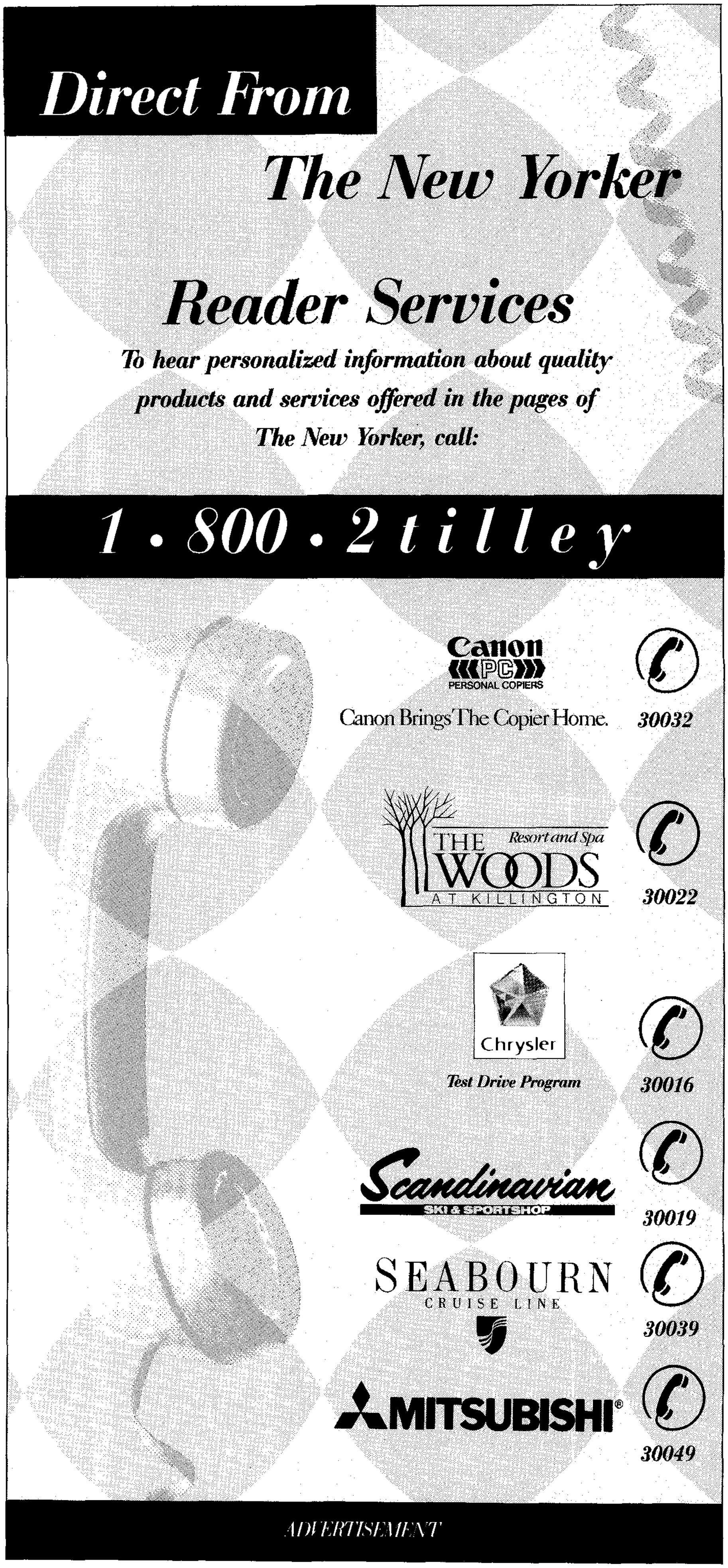
the latter but not the former, she argued. "Stripped of its academic jargon," Kirkpatrick's thesis "exorcised morality from foreign policy," Karnow says. He adds that her theory "favored support for any autocracy that served America's interests. Marcos fit the category, and Kirkpatrick was to cling to him to the end—as Reagan did all along." But the Carter Administration had also clung to Marcos, and Karnow does not criticize Richard Holbrooke, who, as an Assistant Secretary of State, was the architect of our policy in the Philippines during the Carter years.

WHEN, in September, 1972, Marcos declared martial law, people in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research argued that a Marcos dictatorship would not serve America's long-term interests. They were ignored, but they were right. Marcos's rule, supported by four successive American Administrations, was inimical to our interests. His corrupt practices ruined the economy and demoralized the military, and the Communist rebellion grew stronger, drawing support from many in the middle class who saw no other alternative. When this state of affairs finally sank in, Washington began to complain—quietly at first, then more loudly. Finally, Washington once again intervened in the Philippines' domestic matters. Among other things, money was secretly channelled to the National Committee for Free Elections (NAMFREL), a citizens' poll-monitoring organization. Then, when the rebellion against Marcos erupted, the C.I.A. was there to help. "Usually posing as reporters, CIA men assisted the mutineers in a disinformation campaign to spread phony news about Marcos's intentions," Karnow writes. (I have not seen this reported elsewhere, and wish Karnow had elaborated. After the congressional investigations of the C.I.A. in the nineteen-seventies, the agency agreed, among other things, not to recruit journalists or pose as journalists. Had that directive been rescinded? Or was it being violated?)

A year after Corazón Aquino's victory, the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy (a euphemism for what is essentially a propaganda effort that the Reagan Administration created to gain support for its policy in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Central America) enumerated, in a confidential memorandum for the White House, a number of programs for the Philippines. One of the objectives was, "through seminars and low-key information programs," to build a "broad and respectable constituency for retaining our bases in the Philippines." In essence, however, the programs were designed to make the Filipinos think and behave more like Americans. Thus, the Office of Public Diplomacy noted with approval that the Asia Society, which has its headquarters on Park Avenue, was bringing together American and Philippine intellectuals and professional leaders "to institute a process of broad planning and expansion of activities in academia, the arts, and professional societies." Both the Republican and the Democratic Parties would be encouraged to establish "sister party" relationships with Filipino political parties, Public Diplomacy officials said. And they recommended the establishment of a "John F. Kennedy"-type school at the University of Manila, adding that "with our help, an initial task might be to train newly elected Philippino legislators." It was a replay of our colonial policy seven decades earlier, when William Howard Taft, the first American governor of the Philippines, encouraged the formation of political parties to contest elections to a national assembly. Taft's vision, Karnow tells us, was that the assembly would be "a political academy in which the Filipinos would learn parliamentary procedures."

During frequent visits to the Philippines a few years ago, Karnow found himself "doubting whether American institutions, implanted there at the turn of the century, could really take root in its soil." The critical question is *why* American interests should take root there. Why do we keep trying to make the Filipinos resemble us? Look at Thailand and Taiwan. They are success stories, economically booming, and at the moment, some would say, they're relatively democratic and stable. They haven't adopted Western values and systems; if anything, they have rejected them, and have chosen to remain Asian.

ON the jacket of Karnow's book is an endorsement by Representative Solarz. The book is "a must read," he says, "for all who care about the fate and the future of the Philippines." After finishing "In Our Image," one wonders how Solarz can continue to advocate the appropriation of such huge sums for the Aquino government. Karnow says of Mrs. Aquino, "Essentially conservative, as befit a member of her class, she sought to resurrect the institutions dismantled by Marcos rather than construct a new system. In the process, she revived the old dynasties he had dispossessed, including her own family, and they jockeyed to regain their former positions of privilege." An oligarchy of some sixty families rules today, preserving a system that is essentially feudal, and it seems reasonable to conclude that American aid will not dismantle this élite. America doesn't give money to undermine rulers in friendly countries, and the Filipino leaders wouldn't accept the aid if they thought it was going to harm them.

Karnow's critique of Mrs. Aquino and his observations of the Philippines today should disturb Washington policymakers. His book is not a polemic; it is a balanced, politically centrist account. Moreover, he was very close to Benigno S. (Ninoy) Aquino, Jr., and it is clear from the book that he is fond of Mrs. Aquino personally, as are most American correspondents and leaders who have met her. Yet he writes, "Revisiting the Philippines during the years following Cory's takeover, I was reminded of the 1960s, with its disorder, drift and doubt. Now, as then, there appeared to be little prospect for the profound and pervasive changes vital to deter the spread of the Communist insurgency or perhaps even the return of Marcos in a different guise." This last sentence is explosive—perhaps the most provocative in the book from the perspective of the future of America in the Philippines.

The most visible commitment to change would have been a land-reform program—something that has been needed in the Philippines since the Huk rebellion, and something that would undoubtedly wean many peasants away from the Communists. But the land reform that the Philippine Congress has enacted is, as Karnow puts it, "riddled with loopholes" for the benefit of the landowners. The Philippine rich seem to be confident that we will defend them from the Communists, and, indeed, American officials routinely invoke the Communist threat as a justification for further aid. But the Communist movement in the Philippines, while brutal and hard-line, is an indigenous one, and has not received any outside assistance. By contrast, in the past few years the United States has given the Philippines nearly five hundred million dollars in military assistance—helicopters, trucks, communications equipment, uniforms, spare parts—to defeat the insurgency. What is needed is not more military hardware but changes in the policies and attitudes of the ruling Filipinos. If they aren't willing to make those changes, is it our obligation to save them from their own Communists? This is the question that Congress should, but does not, debate.

In his preface Karnow tells the reader that his book is less about the Philippines than about America, but one does learn a great deal about the Filipino character and Filipino society from the book, and what one learns doesn't warrant enthusiasm about the future of the Philippines. Take corruption, for example. It is "endemic," says Karnow, and throughout the book he presents ample evidence to establish that it is. "What are we in power for?" a Filipino politician is reported to have said in the nineteen-fifties, when he was defending himself against charges of corruption. In 1988, according to Karnow, corruption cost the Philippine treasury two and a half billion dollars. At that rate, it will take only two years to consume the proposed Marshall Plan. And it will take even less if the next Philippine President is either Salvador Laurel, scion of an oligarchic family who has chafed at being Mrs. Aquino's Vice-President, or Juan Ponce Enrile, who dutifully served Marcos as Minister of Defense and grew exceedingly rich in the process.

Perhaps the greatest impediment to the Philippines' developing into an economically prosperous and politically stable democratic country is the absence of a strong sense of nationalism. The Philippines' neighbor Indonesia is an instructive contrast. The country encompasses more islands, spread out over a much larger area; Islam, Christianity, and animism are all strong there; and at least three hundred ethnic groups speak more than two hundred distinct languages. Yet today there is a far stronger sense of national identity and pride in Indonesia than in the Philippines—perhaps because the Indonesians had to fight for their independence, while the Filipinos were given theirs.

The Philippines and Indonesia gained their independence at about the same time, but the Philippines had all the advantages: a more highly educated population; more teachers, doctors, lawyers, economists. Today, measured by the well-being of their people, the countries are nearly equal. Politically, Indonesia has been an authoritarian state, ruled by Suharto, since 1967, but, looking ten or twenty years ahead, I believe that Indonesia could be a more democratic and prosperous nation than the Philippines, which has received about three times as much American assistance per capita as Indonesia. More money, and thus continued dependence on the United States, isn't going to help the Philippines find its national identity.

If the United States feels an obligation to the Philippines—and it should, given the record of the last eighty years—the answer isn't a Marshall Plan. A better solution would be to cancel a substantial part of the Philippines' twenty-nine-billion-dollar debt, most of which was incurred during the Marcos era. The debt makes any prospect of development a cruel mirage. Last year, the service on the debt alone drained a billion dollars more from the Philippines than the country received in new foreign assistance—this in a country where approximately sixty per cent of the people live below the poverty level and where there are a million street children.

After forgiving the debt, Washington ought to call to mind the message that a State Department officer proposed to deliver to the Philippine President who came to the United States with hat in hand back in 1949. The essence of the message, Karnow writes, was "Tell the Filipinos to reform—or else," and the officer's actual words were "Darn it, *they* are the ones who are threatened with a fate worse than death." Once that message is delivered, the United States should drastically reduce the size of its embassy in Manila, which

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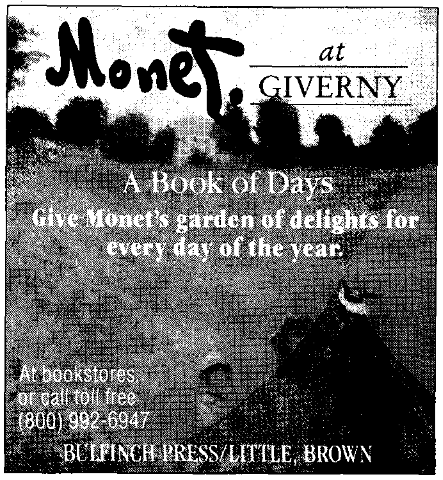
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BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE GEOGRAPHY OF DESIRE, by Robert Boswell (Knopf; $18.95). Everything in this novel is made elusive. The existence of the town where it takes place is called into question by the very government of the (unnamed) Central American country it is part of. Leon, a Californian who runs the local hotel, hates to divulge his history and likes to keep more than one love affair going at a time. One of his lovers is Pilar, who needs to elude the government, because she has opposed it. Another is the teenage Lourdes, who is said to be the smartest pupil in the village school but behaves like any infatuated teenager, until she behaves like a crazy one. Leon's drinking buddy is Ramon, whose dream it is to send his son to college, and who tells stories about the town and its magical properties. Pilar's grandmother tells accurate fortunes. They are somewhat stock characters—the soft-living nihilist, the Communist beauty, the drunken dreamer. Toward the end, however, an agent of the oppressive regime shows up, making most of what is obscure visible—and if what you feel is not strictly a result of the action of the story (you know that countries like this exist), and if it is anger more than grief, the ending nevertheless shakes you up.

IMPACT, by Stephen Greenleaf (Morrow; $19.95). One of Mr. Greenleaf's previous novels had to do with a divorce lawyer, and it offered us an abundance of serious fun with the law. His new novel offers us an abundant study of a more serious kind of law, in the world of the aviation lawyer. A commuter plane en route from Los Angeles to San Francisco crashes, and there is a rush of lawyers to sign up the kin of the victims in possibly profitable litigation. Mr. Greenleaf chooses one case to follow, a man who survived, but with nothing except his brain-damaged life, and focusses, through the lawyer engaged by the man's wife, on the apparently sorry record of American commercial airlines in applying the full range of safety technology that is currently available. This is a courtroom novel, and it is as enthralling as it is disturbing.

GENERAL

WITHOUT CONSENT OR CONTRACT: THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN SLAVERY, by Robert William Fogel (Norton; $22.50), and SLAVERY: HISTORY AND HISTORIANS, by Peter J. Parish (Harper & Row; $22.50). Two valuable studies. Fogel, who (with Stanley Engerman) wrote "Time on the Cross," the stimulating work that applied quantitative analysis to the history of slavery, here refines those methods and arguments, maintaining that American slavery was economically rational. "Slavery was profitable, efficient, and economically viable . . . but it was never morally good." He also discusses the abolitionist movements in Britain and this country to demonstrate how the pursuit of political effectiveness diluted their moral message. In commenting on other historical approaches to slavery, Fogel mentions some of the same books as Parish, whose volume is a critical survey of twentieth-century historical works on slavery. Parish, a United Kingdom specialist in American studies, is courteous, concise, readable, and knowledgeable. His purpose is to convey the variety of questions that modern historians have asked and begun to answer. There is no mistaking his excitement when he describes the work of "historians of slavery during the last generation" as "one of the greatest historical endeavors of modern times."

WALLED GARDENS: SCENES FROM AN ANGLO-IRISH CHILDHOOD, by Annabel Davis-Goff (Knopf; $19.95). The author, daughter of an Anglo-Irish family of County Waterford, in southern Ireland, was born and raised, she says, in "a stratum of society which was more than waning, it was facing extinction." Her early years were spent in one of the fine country houses of the former ruling class: there were maids, and governesses for her and her sisters and brother; her father rode steeplechases, and hunted every week in winter. But the grounds and woods were overgrown, and the atmosphere was of decay; there was never enough money. This evocative memoir is far from gloomy, however. The author, whose youthful perceptions were sharpened by an inherent apprehensiveness, was a shrewd observer of people, with an eye to the comic, and she was alive to the beauty and richness of the Irish landscape and seascape, and to the wonders that flourished in the walled gardens of the old estates, like her family's Ballinaparka. This recapture of the past is layered, for it is also the unsentimental story of a sensitive girl's coming to maturity, and her discovery that unsuspected strengths of character were part of her heritage. Family photographs.

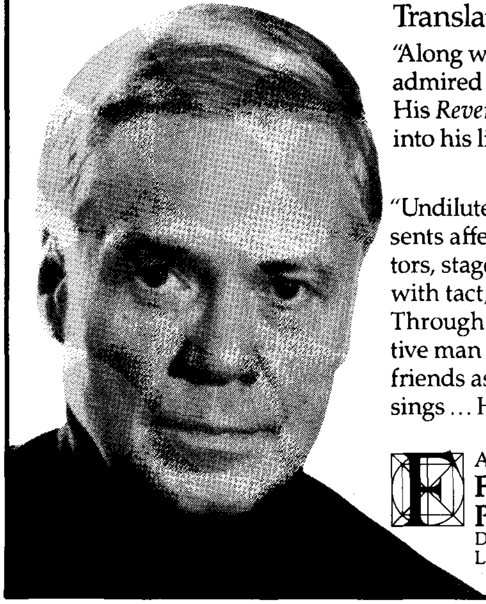
MYSTERY AND CRIME

MAIGRET AND THE FORTUNETELLER, by Georges Simenon, translated from the French by Geoffrey Sainsbury (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $16.95). In this 1944 novel, which reaches us only now, the incomparable M. Simenon has fashioned one of his finest chain-stitch plots. Maigret is presented with an ominous scribble: "Tomorrow afternoon on the stroke of five I am going to kill the fortuneteller." And, sure enough, a fortune-teller of dim repute *is* killed—stabbed to death. A simple-minded old man is found locked in her kitchen. A clerk nervously confesses to Maigret the theft of money from his employer—a theft that never occurred. A young girl yearns for a jaunty man in a green sports car. There is a fisherman who regularly visits a Seine resort but never wets a line. Maigret puzzles over these tangled threads, gently tugging here and there, until—inspired by countless beers, wines, liquors—he pulls the right one, and, presto, the whole affair unravels, revealing a nasty truth and an elegant irony.

•

Christina Weiss to Gary A. Stuber, Sept. 30, in Princeton, N.J. Bride is an actress.
Tamara Weiss to Gary A. Stuber, Sept. 30, on Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Bride is a film producer.—*Marriages column in Variety.*

Groom is a caution.



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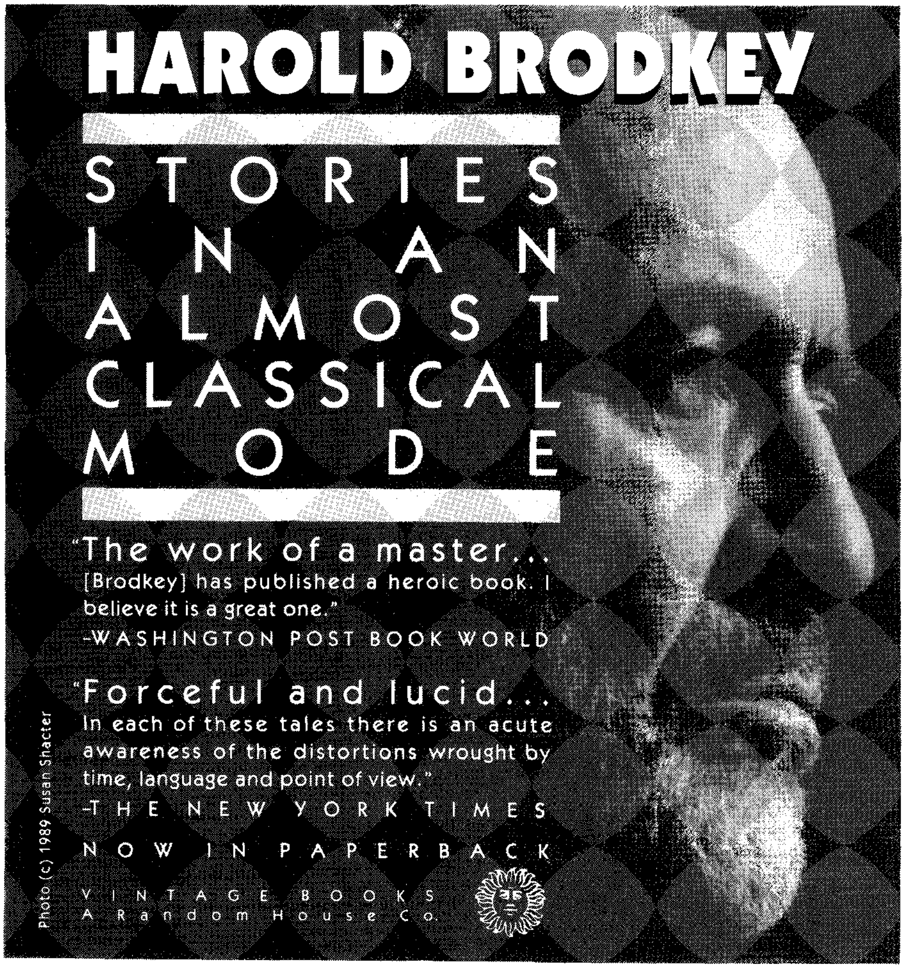

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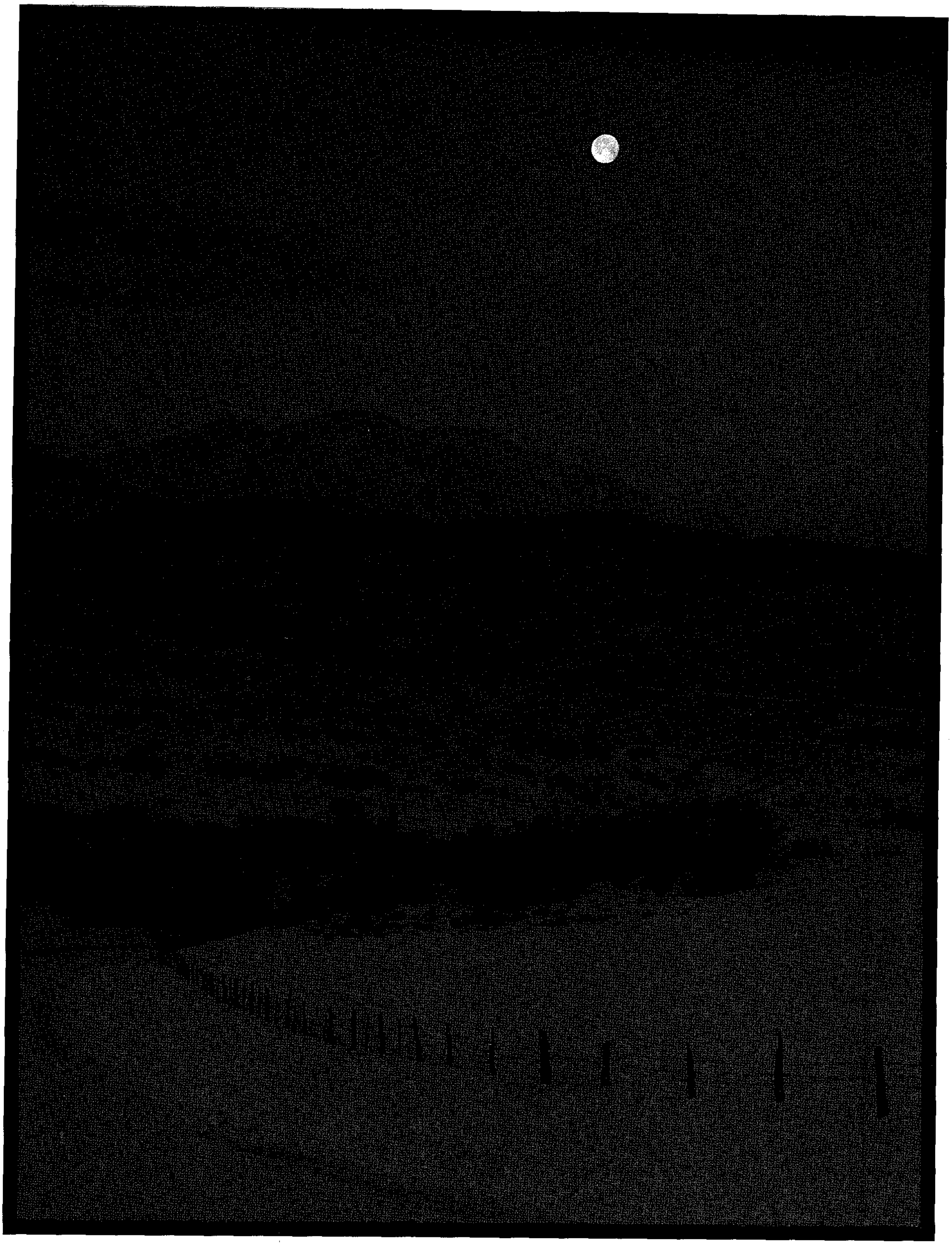

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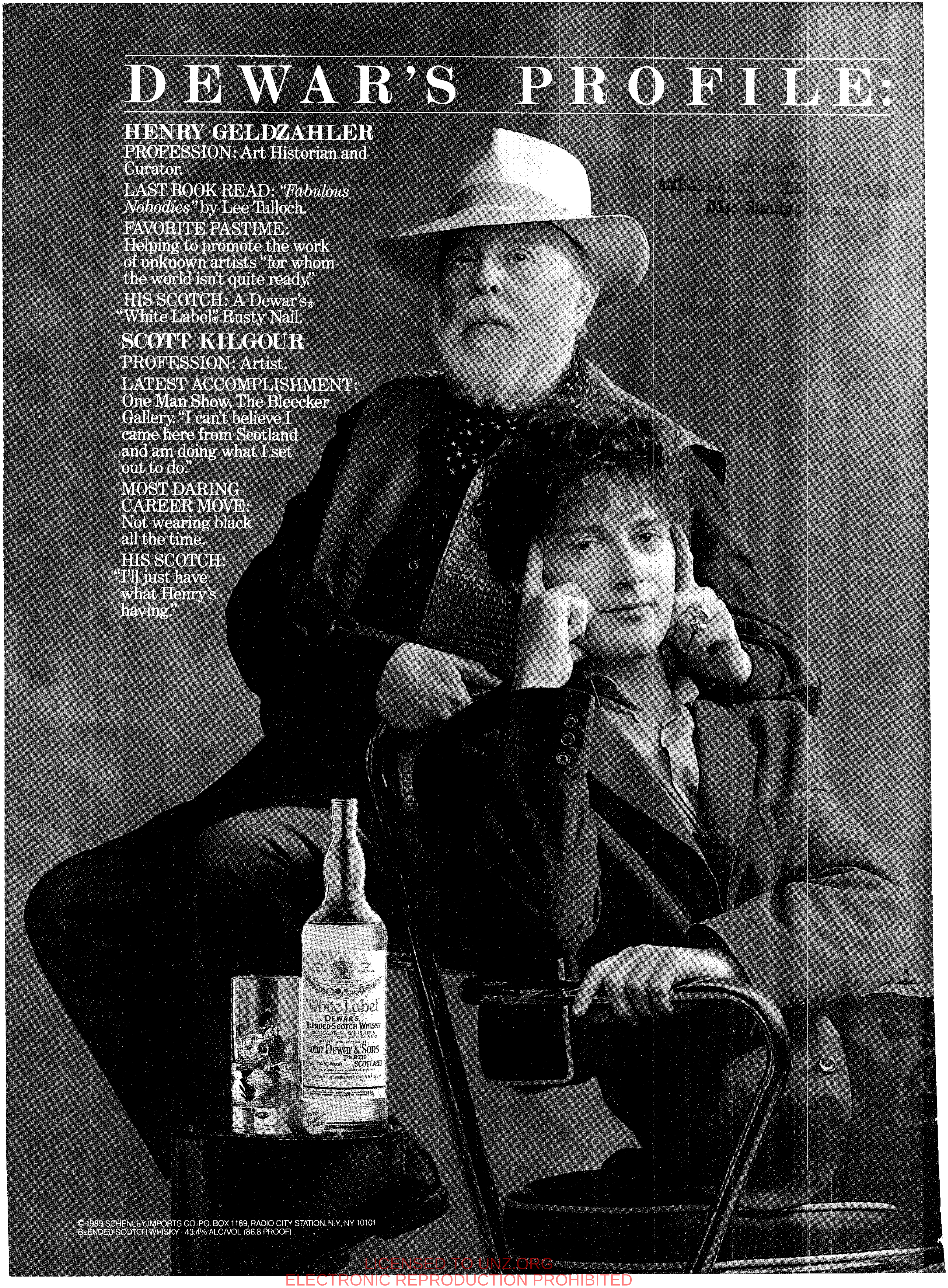

DEWAR'S PROFILE:

HENRY GELDZAHLER
PROFESSION: Art Historian and Curator.
LAST BOOK READ: *"Fabulous Nobodies"* by Lee Tulloch.
FAVORITE PASTIME: Helping to promote the work of unknown artists "for whom the world isn't quite ready."
HIS SCOTCH: A Dewar's® "White Label"® Rusty Nail.

SCOTT KILGOUR
PROFESSION: Artist.
LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: One Man Show, The Bleecker Gallery. "I can't believe I came here from Scotland and am doing what I set out to do."
MOST DARING CAREER MOVE: Not wearing black all the time.
HIS SCOTCH: "I'll just have what Henry's having."

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